TALKS

WITH

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Volume One

FOREWORD*

The "Talks", first published in three volumes, is now issued a handy one-volume edition. There is no doubt that the present edition will be received by aspirants all over the world with the same veneration and regard that the earlier edition elicited from them. This is not a book to be lightly read and laid aside; it is bound to prove to be an unfailing guide to increasing numbers of pilgrims to the Light Everlasting.

We cannot be too grateful to Sri Munagala S. Venkataramiah (now Swami Ramanananda Saraswati) for the record that he kept of the "Talks" covering a period of four years from 1935 to 1939. Those devotees who had the good fortune of seeing Bhagavan Ramana will, on reading these "Talks", become naturally reminiscent and recall with delight their own mental record of the words of the Master. Despite the fact that the great Sage of Arunachala taught for the most part through silence, he did instruct through speech also, and that too lucidly without baffling and beclouding the minds of his listeners. One would wish that every word that he uttered had been preserved for posterity. But we have to be thankful for what little of the utterances has been put on record. These "Talks" will be found to throw light on the "Writings" of the Master; and probably it is best to study them along with the "Writings", translations of which are available.

Sri Ramana's teachings were not given in general. In fact, the Sage had no use for "lectures" or "discourses". His words were primarily addressed to the particular aspirant who felt some difficulty in his spiritual path and sought to have it resolved. But, as the same difficulties arise in the quest after the Self and as the method of resolving them is the same, the Maharshi's replies to questions have the quality of universality.

It is not all that can ask the right questions or frame them properly. The "Talks" of the *Guru*, therefore, is not simply to answer to the point, as in an examination paper. He has often to get behind the words that constitute a question and correct the questioner even in

* Originally written for the Second Edition.

the matter of questioning. And, when irrelevant and futile questions are asked, it is not his business to satisfy the idle curiosity of the questioner or confirm him in his delusions. Sri Ramana does not leave his interlocutor in the place where he was. As one of the devotees put it, "All our questions are from our standpoint, and Sri Bhagavan's replies are from his standpoint. The questions are not only answered, but are also undermined."

Various are the attitudes with which one may approach a saint. Sceptics and agnostics, theists and atheists, seekers of miracles and hunters of psychic phenomena - all used to go to the Maharshi. Each would naturally put questions that came uppermost to his or her mind; and the nature of the questions would depend on the attitude and interests of the person concerned. The glory of the Master lay in removing the attitudes and interests that were base and making the devotee long for realizing the Supreme Truth.

Visitors to the Asramam often used to put questions to Sri Ramana about occult powers and psychic phenomena. Is it not good to acquire occult powers such as telepathy? Is not the power to make one's body invisible a mark of mature wisdom. Can one read others' minds? The Master's reply to all such questions was that the occult and the miraculous are not the spiritual. The supernormal powers are more hindrances than helps in the path to the Supreme Spirit. Some questioners were interested in matters relating to the dead: What happens to the dead? Can one see them? Here again, Sri Ramana taught that these problems were irrelevant and that no seeker after the truth should be concerned with them. An aristocratic and distinguished lady-visitor once enquired: 'Maharajji, can we see the dead?' The Master replied: 'Yes'. The lady asked: 'Can the *yogis* show them to us?' The Master: 'Yes, they may. But do not ask me to show them to you; for I cannot'. The lady: 'Do you see them?' The Master: 'Yes, in dreams.'

Sri Ramana's central teaching is: Self-inquiry. Instead of wanting to know this and that, seek to know the Self. Ask 'Who am I?' instead of asking about a hundred other things. Self-inquiry ought to be the easiest of all tasks. But it seems to be the most difficult because we have become strangers to our Self. What one has to do is simple - to

abide as the Self. This is the ultimate Truth. This is one's eternal, natural, inherent state. On account of ignorance we identify ourselves with the not-I.

The most subtle of all these identifications is with the ego. Let us search for the root of the ego. Where from does this pseudo-I arise? At the end of this quest we shall find that the ego disappears letting the eternal Self shine. So the best discipline is the inquiry: 'Who am I?' This is the greatest *japa*. This is the true *pranayama*. The thought 'I am not the body' (*naham*) is exhalation (*rechaka*); the inquiry 'Who am I?' (*koham*) is inhalation (*puraka*); the realization 'I am He' (*soham*) is retention of breath (*kumbhaka*). The fruit of Self-inquiry is the realization that the Self is all, and that there is nothing else. For those who follow this method no other *sadhana* is necessary. But even those who adopt the discipline of devotion (*bhakti*) reach the same goal. If one surrenders one's ego to either the *Guru* or God, one realizes the Self.

Sri Ramana's teachings as found in the "Talks" will bring hope to everyone. No one need think that he is beyond the pale of redemption. An old American visitor once asked the Master, 'Maharshi, do you think we are bad boys'? The Master's characteristic reply was, 'Do not tell me so. But you need not think you are bad boys'. Anything that is bad in us will surely be removed, if only we listen to the Maharshi's wise words that are recorded in the present book.

And, may we read it with a view to preparing ourselves for understanding the Master's higher teaching which was through silence!

University of Madras,
August 1l, 1958. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

INTRODUCTION

These 'Talks' cover a period of four years, l935-1939, and were all recorded by Sri Munagala S. Venkataramiah (now Swami Ramanananda Saraswati), a very old disciple of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Though a Telugu by birth he speaks English and Tamil fluently and is conversant with Sanskrit. These are necessary qualifications for one who wished to record the conversations of Sri Bhagavan with his various disciples and visitors.

The four years that are covered here, were the days when the Asramam reached the summit of its glory. Maharshi's health was on the whole good and the Hall where he sat was open day and night to welcome one and all. Visitors flocked there from every corner of the world, there was hardly a country that was not represented at one time or another. The war naturally interfered with this influx, though the number of Indian visitors steadily increased as time went on. But it was these conversations, many with Westerners, that were especially interesting; the modern tendency towards materialism and irreligion, on which the West often prides itself, met its match here. Sri Bhagavan glowed like the sun, and even those who did not understand him or agree with his words were fascinated and could not help but be elevated by his presence.

Though Sri Venkataramiah was fully qualified for the work, to follow Sri Bhagavan was no easy task when he once started to talk. He had such a command of his subject that he was never at a loss for a word in whichever language he might happen to be speaking; so, few notes could be taken, the listeners being too busy trying not to lose a word of what was being said, added to which it was not always easy to understand. Sri Venkataramiah acted as interpreter for the many English-speaking people who flocked to the Asramam, as Sri Bhagavan was reluctant to say more than a few words in that language, though he knew it sufficiently well to read the English newspapers and magazines. But to act as interpreter was an even more difficult task than just recording; the flow of words was so steady that no interval was left in which their meaning could be conveyed to the ardent questioner. Often Sri Bhagavan had to be asked to wait while his words were conveyed to the anxious listener. So the difficulties of

* Originally written for the First Edition.

making this record can easily be imagined; only one who had sat for years at the feet of the Master and had thoroughly absorbed his philosophy and the way he expounded it, was competent for the task. Sri Venkataramiah, the ideal person for this, had luckily been found.

That the language used here is not always elegant is admitted, this was to be expected in the circumstances; doubtless it could have been corrected, but it has been left much as it was, as it was felt that a certain spontaneity that it now possesses would otherwise have been lost. Though the conversations were in various South Indian languages most of it was recorded in English, the rest in Tamil and Telugu, which passages have been translated for the purpose of this book. The completed notes were often shown to the questioners for verification, but the whole had the seal of approval of Sri Bhagavan himself, as the records were always shown to him for his approval or the necessary alteration after they had been entered in the notebook. Thus we may be sure that here we have the exact teaching of the Master, and reading them we once again sit at his feet in the Old Hall, drinking in every word that falls from his lips; enraptured by his smile, the movement of his delicate hands, and his actions; for he was a true artist, often acting the part of the story he was telling, the better to drive home his point.

Some may be inclined to criticise this book as monotonous, but this supposed monotony is deliberate, for some new point is always brought out however similar the talk may seem. Sri Bhagavan always stressed the one essential truth that was necessary for Liberation, that there is only one Self and nothing but the Self. Know that and everything else is known. This cannot be repeated too often.

Doubtless, an intellectual grasp of this fact sets one on the path, but the path once started, mental knowledge must then become actual experience. To know a thing absolutely, not just superficially, one must be that thing, otherwise knowledge is incomplete. As I pointed out, we are always nothing but the Self, but associating ourselves with the ignorance of limitation, with an ego, we forget the Seer and identify ourselves with the seen. But what can we do about it? The habit is so long-standing, birth after birth has been imagined and century after century has been fabricated by the mind. It has thus involved itself more and more in ignorance, that it now finds itself

disinclined and, even if willing, almost unable to disentangle itself from the thralls of the play-world it has created.

You are the Self, he tells us, nothing but the Self, anything else is just imagination, so BE the Self here and now. There is no need to run off to a forest or shut oneself in a room; carry on with your essential activities but free yourself from association with the doer of them. Self is the witness, you are That.

Example after example is given in these talks, in language to suit all tastes and mentalities. The reading of the book automatically drives one inward to the source. It is itself a sufficient *sadhana*. Do not delude yourself, you are already That, there is nothing more to be obtained, only false association to be shed, limitation to be recognised as illusory.

His method of doing this is well-known: Self-Enquiry. Always and at all times seek for the source of the ego, the apparent actor, and on the attainment of that goal, he tells us, the ego will drop away of its own accord, and nothing will be left but the all-blissful Self. But this is not the place to go into details of method; for those interested the necessary books can easily be obtained from Sri Ramanasramam.

What more is there to say, but to advise one and all to read this book and try and make it a part of themselves? Not one word to be passed over lightly, or one conversation to be dismissed as superfluous. It is all pure gold. And here again we find the ever-living Sri Ramana Maharshi before us in person, teaching us in his own inimitable words for our benefit and delight.

It was found after preparing this book for the press, that the first part was not in chronological order, but rather than delay publication it was decided not to alter the present arrangement as it makes absolutely no difference to the context. The dates are only included for reference, and as a guarantee of authenticity.

Sri Ramanasramam,
1st January, 1955.

Note By The Recorder

In a very critical and distressing period of his life, an humble devotee sought the Presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, for his own peace of mind, and lived in the Asramam with the kind permission of the *Sarvadhikari*, Sri Niranjanananda Swami. The seeker took it upon himself to note down, as occasions arose, the sweet, refreshing and enlightening words of the Master. This self-imposed task was undertaken for the purification of his own mind and better understanding of the subtle and profound words of Sri Bhagavan. Shortly after, the *Sarvadhikari* officially took them over to the Asramam. These notes* covering the period 1935-39 are included in the present volumes with the hope that some readers may find them interesting and helpful in their spiritual quest.

Sri Ramanasramam,
1st January, 1955.

RECORDER

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* A few extracts from these notes have already appeared in the Ashram publication: *Maharshi's Gospel*.

Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi

Volume 1

15th May, 1935

Talk 1.

A wandering monk (*sannyasi*) was trying to clear his doubt: "How to realise that all the world is God?"

Maharshi: If you make your outlook that of wisdom, you will find the world to be God. Without knowing the Supreme Spirit (Brahman), how will you find His all-pervasiveness?

Talk 2.

Someone enquired about the nature of perception.

M.: Whatever state one is in, the perceptions partake of that state. The explanation is that in the waking state (*jagrat*) the gross body perceives gross names and forms; in *swapna* (the dream state) the mental body perceives the mental creations in their manifold forms and names; in the *sushupti* (deep dreamless sleep), the identification with the body being lost, there are no perceptions; similarly in the Transcendental state identity with Brahman places the man in harmony with everything, and there is nothing apart from his Self.

Talk 3.

A question was asked as to the nature of happiness.

M.: If a man thinks that his happiness is due to external causes and his possessions, it is reasonable to conclude that his happiness must increase with the increase of possessions and diminish in proportion to their diminution. Therefore if he is devoid of possessions, his happiness should be nil. What is the real experience of man? Does it conform to this view?

In deep sleep the man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Everyone desires

to sleep soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realise his Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness.

Talk 4.

Maharshi was asked by an educated young man: "How do you say that the Heart is on the right, whereas the biologists have found it to be on the left?" The man asked for authority.

M.: Quite so. The physical organ is on the left; that is not denied. But the Heart of which I speak is non-physical and is only on the right side. It is my experience, no authority is required by me. Still you can find confirmation in a Malayalam Ayurvedic book and in *Sita Upanishad*; and he produced the quotation (*mantra*) from the latter and repeated the text (*sloka*) from the former.

Talk 5.

Mr. M. Frydman, an engineer, remarked on the subject of Grace, "A salt doll diving into the sea will not be protected by a waterproof coat".

It was a very happy simile and was applauded as such. Maharshi added, "The body is the waterproof coat".

Talk 6.

A question was asked by a monk (*sannyasi*) about how to prevent the mind from being distracted.

M.: You see the objects on forgetting your own Self. If you keep hold of your Self, you will not see the objective world.

Talk 7.

When asked if occult powers (*siddhis*) can be achieved along with Omnipotence (*Iswaratva*) as mentioned in the last verse of *Dakshinamurti Ashtakam*, Maharshi said: "Let Omnipotence (*Iswaratva*) be accomplished first and then the other question may be raised."

Talk 8.

"Can anyone get any benefit by repeating sacred syllables (*mantras*) picked up casually?

M.: "No. He must be competent and initiated in such *mantras*." Maharshi illustrated this by the following story: A King visited his

Premier in his residence. There he was told that the Premier was engaged in repetition of sacred syllables (*japa*). The King waited for him and, on meeting him, asked what the *japa* was. The Premier said that it was the holiest of all, *Gayatri*. The King desired to be initiated by the Premier. But the Premier confessed his inability to initiate him. Therefore the King learned it from someone else, and meeting the Minister later he repeated the *Gayatri* and wanted to know if it was right. The Minister said that the *mantra* was correct, but it was not proper for him to say it. When pressed for an explanation, the Minister called to a page close by and ordered him to take hold of the King. The order was not obeyed. The order was often repeated, and still not obeyed. The King flew into a rage and ordered the same man to hold the Minister, and it was immediately done. The Minister laughed and said that the incident was the explanation required by the King. "How?" asked the King. The Minister replied, "The order was the same and the executor also, but the authority was different. When I ordered, the effect was nil, whereas, when you ordered, there was immediate effect. Similarly with *mantras*."

Talk 9.

Someone enquired: Why is it said in scriptures that the Sage is like a child?

M.: A child and a Sage (*jnani*) are similar in a way. Incidents interest a child only so long as they last. It ceases to think of them after they have passed away. So then, it is apparent that they do not leave any impression on the child and it is not affected by them mentally. So it is with a Sage.

Talk 10.

A visitor asked how to realise oneself in accordance with Maharshi's instructions, contained in his text of *Truth Revealed*, verse 9, supplement. The difficulty was in controlling the mind.

M.: It is to be done by controlling the breath. If you practise it by yourself without other help, then the mind is controlled. Otherwise the mind comes under control spontaneously in the presence of a superior power. Such is the greatness of association with the wise (*satsanga*).

Talk 11.

"Can destiny (*karma*) ever come to an end?"

M.: The *karmas* carry the seeds of their own destruction in themselves.

Talk 12.

A man asked the Maharshi to say something to him. When asked what he wanted to know, he said that he knew nothing and wanted to hear something from the Maharshi.

M.: You know that you know nothing. Find out that knowledge. That is liberation (*mukti*).

6th January, 1935

Talk 13.

Mrs. M. A. Piggot, an English lady, who had read "Search in Secret India", came to see the Maharshi. The services of a disciple as interpreter were provided. There were many visitors at the time in the hall, including some ladies with their infants. The place resounded with noise. At length silence prevailed. Suddenly Maharshi, who seemed to be looking at infinite space, was heard to say softly, "Monkey"! A little baby was then discovered in the doorway (unobserved by the mother who was seated on the other side of the door) with a large monkey standing on his hind legs, who with both hands was fondling the child not hurting it in the slightest, both being at peace with each other in Maharshi's presence. When Maharshi's voice was heard the monkey jumped away adroitly and disappeared. The incident greatly impressed the lady.

7th January, 1935

"Is a Master necessary for realisation?" Mrs. Piggot asked first.

M.: The realisation is the result of the Master's grace more than teachings, lectures, meditation, etc. They are only secondary aids, whereas the former is the primary and the essential cause.

Devotee: What are the obstacles which hinder realisation of the Self?

M.: They are habits of mind (*vasanas*).

D.: How to overcome the mental habits (*vasanas*)?

M.: By realising the Self.

D.: That is a vicious circle.

M.: It is the ego which raises such difficulties, creating obstacles and then suffers from the perplexity of apparent paradoxes. Find out who makes the enquiries and the Self will be found.

D.: What are the aids for realisation?

M.: The teachings of the Scriptures and of realised souls

D.: Can such teachings be discussions, lectures and meditations?

M.: Yes, all these are only secondary aids, whereas the essential is the Master's grace.

D.: How long will it take for one to get that?

M.: Why do you desire to know?

D.: To give me hope.

M.: Even such a desire is an obstacle. The Self is ever there, there is nothing without it. Be the Self and the desires and doubts will disappear. Such Self is the witness in sleep, dream and waking states of existence. These states belong to the ego. The Self transcends even the ego. Did you not exist in sleep? Did you know then that you were asleep or unaware of the world? It is only in the waking state that you describe the experience of sleep as being unawareness; therefore the consciousness when asleep is the same as that when awake. If you know what this waking consciousness is, you will know the consciousness which witnesses all the three states. Such consciousness could be found by seeking the consciousness as it was in sleep.

D.: In that case, I fall asleep.

M.: No harm!

D.: It is a blank.

M.: For whom is the blank? Find out. You cannot deny yourself at any time. The Self is ever there and continues in all states.

D.: Should I remain as if in sleep and be watchful at the same time?

M.: Yes. Watchfulness is the waking state. Therefore the state will not be one of sleep, but sleepless sleep. If you go the way of your

thoughts you will be carried away by them and you will find yourself in an endless maze.

D.: So, then, I must go back tracing the source of thoughts.

M.: Quite so; in that way the thoughts will disappear and the Self alone will remain. In fact there is no inside or outside for the Self. They are also projections of the ego. The Self is pure and absolute.

D.: It is understood intellectually only. Is not intellect a help for realisation?

M.: Yes, up to a certain stage. Even so, realise that the Self transcends the intellect — the latter must itself vanish to reach the Self.

D.: Does my realisation help others?

M.: Yes, certainly. It is the best help possible. But there are no others to be helped. For a realised being sees the Self, just like a goldsmith estimating the gold in various jewels. When you identify yourself with the body then only the forms and shapes are there. But when you transcend your body the others disappear along with your body-consciousness.

D.: Is it so with plants, trees, etc.?

M.: Do they exist at all apart from the Self? Find it out. You think that you see them. The thought is projected out from your Self. Find out wherefrom it rises. Thoughts will cease to rise and the Self alone will remain.

D.: I understand theoretically. But they are still there.

M.: Yes. It is like a cinema-show. There is the light on the screen and the shadows flitting across impress the audience as the enactment of some piece. Similarly also will it be, if in the same play an audience also is shown. The seer, the seen, will then only be the screen. Apply it to yourself. You are the screen, the Self has created the ego, the ego has its accretions of thoughts which are displayed as the world, the trees, plants, etc., of which you are asking. In reality, all these are nothing but the Self. If you see the Self, the same will be found to be all, everywhere and always. Nothing but the Self exists.

D.: Yes, I still understand only theoretically. Yet the answers are simple and beautiful and convincing.

M.: Even the thought, "I do not realise" is a hindrance. In fact, the Self alone is.

8th January, 1935

Talk 14.

An old man came and sat in the hall. Maharshi was reading Sarma's Sanskrit recension of *Arunachala Akshara Manamalai* (the first of *The Five Hymns to Arunachala*). The man asked softly: "It is said that realisation is beyond expression; and expression always fails to describe the realisation. How is it?"

M.: The point has been mentioned in *Arunachala Ashtakam*, Verse three where it is admitted that, although the expression of realisation is impossible, still its existence is indicated.

Soon after there were visible signs of emotion in the man. His breath was deep and hard and he fell on the floor prostrating humbly and got up only after one or two minutes. Remaining calm a brief while, he left the place. Evidently the man had some illumination. He sought confirmation from Maharshi, who responded fittingly. He found confirmation, and humbly and feelingly acknowledged the divine intercession on his behalf.

Talk 15.

A question was asked about the Upanishadic passage, "The Supreme Spirit is subtler than the subtlest and larger than the largest."

M.: Even the structure of the atom has been found by the mind. Therefore the mind is subtler than the atom. That which is behind the mind, namely the individual soul, is subtler than the mind. Further, the Tamil saint Manickavachagar has said of the specks dancing in a beam of sunlight, that if each represents a universe, the whole sunlight will represent the Supreme Being.

19th January, 1935

Talk 16.

Mr. Douglas Ainslie (Mr. Grant Duff), an aristocratic English gentleman, 70 years old, nephew of a former Governor of Madras, an author and poet formerly attached to the British Legation in Athens, Paris and The Hague, had come to Madras as a guest of Government House. He came

to see Maharshi with a letter of introduction from Paul Brunton. Next day he returned and remained a little less than an hour in the hall. On both days practically no words were exchanged, only gaze meeting gaze. His habits are abstemious; he remains without food of any kind till 1 p.m. and then lunches; he is said to have coffee and biscuits in the evening and retires without any further food. He has been a bachelor all along, walks a few miles a day on an empty stomach, speaks little and is very graceful in his movements. His voice is low and soft and his words appear to come from the heart. He has friends among whom might be counted the late Sir John Woodroffe, Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Prof. Thomas, Sanskrit Professor in Oxford University. He expressed a desire to hear the Vedas. On Monday a letter arrived from Riga and the questions therein happened to coincide with the questions the European visitor had asked relating to the existence of departed souls and how best to serve them.

The reply sent to Riga was read out to him. Tamil songs from Maharshi's "Truth Revealed" and the Vedas were repeated in his presence. He considered the recitations magnificent. He came the next afternoon and to the wonder of others, had an experience on the previous night which he repeated to Maharshi. It was that he had seen something like an electric light within himself in the heart centre on the right side. And he added further that he had seen the sun shining within. Maharshi smiled a little and then had a translation of "*Atmavidya*" (Self-Knowledge) read out to him wherein there is the cryptic saying that realisation consists in reaching the *Atman* (Self) which is the expanse of consciousness (*chidvyoman*) as distinguished from the mind, which is the expansion of *chittavyoman*. This explanation appealed to him.

Speaking of him later, Maharshi remarked, "Just think of an old man of 70 not choosing to live peacefully in his own house on the income he had earned! How intense has been his earnestness that he has left his native land, dared a sea-voyage of 6,000 miles, and faced the hardships of long railway journeys in a foreign land, ignorant of the language, undergoing the vicissitudes of a lonely life, submitting to the inclemency of a hot climate, in surroundings uncongenial and unaccustomed to him. He could have been happy in his own house. It is his longing for internal peace that has brought him here." Quite so!

The intensity of his earnestness is revealed by his illuminating experiences here within four days of his arrival, people say.

With regard to the question concerning departed souls: so long as a man identifies himself with his gross body the thought materialised as gross manifestations must be real to him. Because his body is imagined to have originated from another physical being, the other exists as truly as his own body. Having existed here once it certainly survives death, because the offspring is still here and feels he has been born of the other. Under these circumstances the other world is true; and the departed souls are benefited by prayers offered for them. On the other hand, considered in a different way, the One Reality is the Self from whom has sprung the ego which contains within itself the seeds of predispositions acquired in previous births. The Self illumines the ego, the predispositions and also the gross senses, whereupon the predispositions appear to the senses to have materialised as the universe, and become perceptible to the ego, the reflection of the Self. The ego identifies itself with the body, and so loses sight of the Self and the result of this inadvertence is dark ignorance and the misery of the present life. The fact of the ego rising from the Self and forgetting it, is birth. So, it may be said that the birth of the individual has killed the mother. The present desire to regain one's mother is in reality the desire to regain the Self, which is the same as realising oneself, or the death of the ego; this is surrender unto the mother, so she may live eternally.

Maharshi then read out from the Tamil version of *Yoga Vasishta* the story of Deerga Tapasi who had two sons, Punya and Papa. After the death of the parents the younger one mourned the loss and the elder brother consoled him as follows: "Why do you mourn the loss of our parents? I shall tell you where they are; they are only within ourselves and are ourselves. For the life-current has passed through innumerable incarnations, births and deaths, pleasures and pains, etc., just as the water current in a river flows over rocks, pits, sands, elevations and depressions on its way, but still the current is unaffected. Again the pleasures and pains, births and deaths, are like undulations on the surface of seeming water in the mirage of the ego. The only reality is the Self from where the ego appears, and runs through thoughts which manifest themselves as the universe and in which the mothers and fathers, friends

and relatives appear and disappear. They are nothing but manifestations of the Self so that one's parents are not outside the Self. So there is no reason to mourn. Learn it, realise it and be happy."

24th January, 1935

Talk 17.

Mr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, an English research scholar of Oxford University, brought a letter of introduction from Mr. Brunton and arrived on a visit.

He was tired after his journey and required rest. He is quite accustomed to Indian ways of living, having visited this country several times. He has learned the Tibetan language and helped in the translation of the "Book of the Dead" and the "Life of Milarepa", the greatest of Tibetan Yogis, and a third book on the "Tibetan Secret Doctrines."

In the afternoon he began to ask a few questions. They related to Yoga. He wanted to know if it was right to kill animals such as tigers, deer, etc., and use the skin for Yoga posture (*asana*).

M.: The mind is the tiger or the deer.

D.: If everything be illusion, then one can take lives?

M.: To whom is illusion? Find that out! In fact everyone is a "killer of the Self" (*atmahan*) every moment of his life.

D.: Which posture (*asana*) is the best?

M.: Any *asana*, possibly *sukha asana* (easy posture or the half-Buddha position). But that is immaterial for *jnana*, the Path of Knowledge.

D.: Does posture indicate the temperament?

M.: Yes.

D.: What are the properties and effects of the tiger's skin, wool, or deer-skin, etc.?

M.: Some have found them out and related them in Yoga books. They correspond to conductors and non-conductors of magnetism, etc. But it is all immaterial for the Path of Knowledge (*Jnana Marga*). Posture really means location and steadfastness in the Self. It is internal. The others refer to external positions.

D.: Which time is most suitable for meditation?

M.: What is time?

D.: Tell me what it is!

M.: Time is only an idea. There is only the Reality Whatever you think it is, it looks like that. If you call it time, it is time. If you call it existence, it is existence, and so on. After calling it time, you divide it into days and nights, months, years, hours, minutes, etc. Time is immaterial for the Path of Knowledge. But some of these rules and discipline are good for beginners.

D.: What is *Jnana Marga*?

M.: Concentration of the mind is in a way common to both Knowledge and Yoga. Yoga aims at union of the individual with the universal, the Reality. This Reality cannot be new. It must exist even now, and it does exist.

Therefore the Path of Knowledge tries to find out how *viyoga* (separation) came about. The separation is from the Reality only.

D.: What is illusion?

M.: To whom is the illusion? Find it out. Then illusion will vanish.

Generally people want to know about illusion and do not examine to whom it is. It is foolish. Illusion is outside and unknown. But the seeker is considered to be known and is inside. Find out what is immediate, intimate, instead of trying to find out what is distant and unknown.

D.: Does Maharshi advise any physical posture for the Europeans?

M.: It may be advisable. However, it must be clearly understood that meditation is not prohibited in the absence of *asanas*, or prescribed times, or any accessories of the kind.

D.: Does Maharshi have any particular method to impart to the Europeans in particular?

M.: It is according to the mental equipment of the individual. There is indeed no hard and fast rule.

Mr. Evans-Wentz began to ask questions, mostly relating to Yoga preliminaries, for all of which Maharshi replied that they are aids to Yoga, which is itself an aid to Self-realisation, the goal of all.

D.: Is work an obstruction to Self-realisation?

M.: No. For a realised being the Self alone is the Reality, and actions are only phenomenal, not affecting the Self. Even when he acts he has no sense of being an agent. His actions are only involuntary and he remains a witness to them without any attachment.

There is no aim for this action. Even one who is still practising the path of Wisdom (*jnana*) can practise while engaged in work. It may be difficult in the earlier stages for a beginner, but after some practice it will soon be effective and the work will not be found a hindrance to meditation.

D.: What is the practice?

M.: Constant search for 'I', the source of the ego. Find out 'Who am I?' The pure 'I' is the reality, the Absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. When That is forgotten, all miseries crop up; when that is held fast, the miseries do not affect the person.

D.: Is not *brahmacharya* (celibacy) necessary for realisation of the Self?

M.: Brahmacharya is 'living in Brahman'. It has no connection with celibacy as commonly understood. A real *brahmachari*, that is one who lives in Brahman, finds bliss in the Brahman which is the same as the Self. Why then should you look for other sources of happiness? In fact the emergence from the Self has been the cause of all the misery.

D.: Celibacy is a *sine qua non* for Yoga?

M.: So it is. Celibacy is certainly an aid to realisation among so many other aids.

D.: Is it then not indispensable? Can a married man realise the Self?

M.: Certainly, it is a matter of fitness of mind. Married or unmarried, a man can realise the Self, because that is here and now. If it were not so, but attainable by some efforts at some other time, and if it were new and something to be acquired, it would not be worthy of pursuit. Because what is not natural cannot be permanent either. But what I say is that the Self is here and now and alone.

D.: God being immanent in all, one should not take life of any kind. Is society right in taking the life of a murderer? Can the State do so either? The Christian countries begin to think that it is wrong to do so.

M.: What is it that prompted the murderer to commit the crime? The same power awards him the punishment. Society or the State is only a tool in the hands of the power. You speak of one life taken away; But what about innumerable lives lost in wars?

D.: Quite so. Loss of lives is wrong anyway. Are wars justified?

M.: For a realised man, the one who remains ever in the Self, the loss of one or several or all lives either in this world or in all the three worlds makes no difference. Even if he happens to destroy them all, no sin can touch such a pure soul. Maharshi quoted the Gita, Chapter 18, Verse 17 - "He who is free from the notion of ego, whose intellect is unattached, though he annihilates all the worlds, he slayeth not, nor is he bound by the results of his actions."

D.: Do not one's actions affect the person in after-births?

M.: Are you born now? Why do you think of other births? The fact is that there is neither birth nor death. Let him who is born think of death and palliatives therefore.

D.: How long did it take Maharshi to realise the Self?

M.: This question is asked because the name and form are perceived. These are the perceptions consequent on the identification of the ego with the gross body.

If the ego identifies itself with the subtle mind, as in dream, the perceptions are subtle also. But in sleep there are no perceptions. Was there not the ego still? Unless it was, there cannot be the memory of having slept. Who was it that slept? You did not say in your sleep that you slept. You say it now in your wakeful state. The ego therefore is the same in wakefulness, dream and sleep. Find out the underlying Reality behind these states. That is the Reality underlying these. In that state there is Being alone. There is no you, nor I, nor he; no present, nor past, nor future. It is beyond time and space, beyond expression.

It is ever there.

Just as a plantain tree produces shoots at its roots, before yielding fruits and perishing, and these shoots, being transplanted, do the same again, so also the original primeval Master of antiquity (Dakshinamurti), who cleared the doubts of his rishi disciples in silence, has left shoots which are ever multiplying. The Guru is a

shoot of that Dakshinamurti. The question does not arise when the Self is realised.

D.: Does Maharshi enter the *nirvikalpa samadhi*?

M.: If the eyes are closed, it is *nirvikalpa*; if open, it is (though differentiated, still in absolute repose) *savikalpa*. The ever-present state is the natural state *sahaja*.

26th January, 1935

Talk 18.

Mr. Evans-Wentz asked: There are yogis with occult powers. What does Maharshi think of them?

M.: The powers are known by hearsay or by exhibition. Thus they are in the realm of the mind only.

D.: Mr. Brunton mentions a yogi in Madras who is said to hold communion with his master in the Himalayas.

M.: It is not more marvellous than telepathy - so commonly known. Telepathy cannot exist without the hearer and television without the seer. What is the difference between hearing from far and from near? It is only the hearer who matters. Without the hearer there cannot be hearing; without the seer there cannot be vision.

D.: So you want me to consider the subject and not the object.

M.: The subject and object appear only after the mind has arisen. The mind comprises them and also the occult powers.

D.: Can the manifestations of light (*jothis*) be seen on Arunachala Hill?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is there any psychic effect in visiting sacred places like Mt. Kailas, Benares, etc.?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is there any benefit accruing by dying in Benares?

M.: Yes, the meaning will be clear if the real Benares and real dying be understood.

D.: You mean that they are in the Self?

M.: Yes.

D.: There are six centres in the body and there are corresponding centres in the world.

M.: Yes. What is in the world is in the body; and what is in the body is in the world also.

D.: Is the sacredness of Benares a matter of faith, or is it externally also real?

M.: Both.

D.: Some people are attracted to one place of pilgrimage and others to another. Is it according to their temperaments?

M.: Yes. Just consider how all of you born in different places and living in other lands are gathered here today? What is the Force which has attracted you here? If this is understood the other Force is also understood.

29th January, 1935

Talk 19.

Mr. Grant Duff asked: Where are memory and forgetfulness located?

M.: In the mind (*chitta*).

30th January, 1935

Talk 20.

Mr. Evans-Wentz: Is solitude necessary for a *jnani*?

M.: Solitude is in the mind of man. One might be in the thick of the world and maintain serenity of mind; such a one is in solitude. Another may stay in a forest, but still be unable to control his mind. He cannot be said to be in solitude. Solitude is a function of the mind. A man attached to desire cannot get solitude wherever he may be; a detached man is always in solitude.

D.: So then, one might be engaged in work and be free from desire and keep up solitude. Is it so?

M.: Yes. Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect the doer. He is, even while working, in solitude.

D.: They say that there are many saints in Tibet who remain in solitude and are still very helpful to the world. How can it be?

M.: It can be so. Realisation of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to humanity. Therefore, the saints are said to be helpful, though they remain in forests. But it should not be forgotten that solitude is not in forests only. It can be had even in towns, in the thick of worldly occupations.

D.: It is not necessary that the saints should mix with people and be helpful to them?

M.: The Self alone is the Reality; the world and the rest of it are not. The realised being does not see the world as different from himself.

D.: Thus then, the saint's realisation leads to the uplift of humanity without the latter being aware of it. Is it so?

M.: Yes. The help is imperceptible but is still there. A saint helps the whole of humanity, unknown to the latter.

D.: Would it not be better if he mixed with others?

M.: There are no others to mix with. The Self is the one and only Reality.

D.: If there be a hundred Self-realised men will it not be to the greater benefit of the world?

M.: When you say 'Self' you refer to the unlimited, but when you add 'men' to it, you limit the meaning. There is only one Infinite Self.

D.: Yes, yes, I see! Sri Krishna has said in the Gita that work must be performed without attachment and such work is better than idleness. Is it Karma Yoga?

M.: What is said is given out to suit the temperament of the hearers.

D.: In Europe it is not understood by the people that a man in solitude can be helpful. They imagine that men working in the world can alone be useful. When will this confusion cease? Will the European mind continue wading in the morass or will it realise the truth?

M.: Never mind Europe or America. Where are they except in your mind? Realise your Self and then all is realised.

If you dream and see several men, and then wake up and recall your dream, do you try to ascertain if the persons of your dream creation are also awake?

D.: What does Maharshi think of the theory of universal illusion (*Maya*)?

M.: What is *Maya*? It is only Reality.

D.: Is not *Maya* illusion?

M.: Maya is used to signify the manifestations of the Reality. Thus *Maya* is only Reality.

D.: Some say that Sri Sankaracharya was only intellectual and not realised. Is it so?

M.: Why worry about Sankaracharya? Realise your own Self. Others can take care of themselves.

D.: Jesus Christ cured people of their diseases. Is that only an occult power (*siddhi*)?

M.: Was Jesus aware at the time that he was curing men of their diseases? He could not have been conscious of his powers. There is a story related as follows: Jesus had once cured a man of his blindness. The man turned wicked, in course of time. Meeting him after some years, Jesus observed his wickedness and asked him why he was so. He replied saying that, when he was blind, he could not commit any sin. But after Jesus had cured him of blindness he grew wicked and Jesus was responsible for his wickedness.

D.: Was not Jesus a Perfected Being possessing occult powers (*siddhi*)?

M.: He could not have been aware of his powers (*siddhis*).

D.: Is it not good to acquire them, such as telepathy, etc.?

M.: Telepathy or radio enables one to see and hear from afar. They are all the same, hearing and seeing. Whether one hears from near or far does not make any difference in hearing. The fundamental factor is the hearer, the subject. Without the hearer or the seer, there can be no hearing or seeing. The latter are the functions of the mind. The occult powers (*siddhis*) are therefore only in the mind. They are not natural to the Self. That which is not natural, but acquired, cannot be permanent, and is not worth striving for.

They denote extended powers. A man is possessed of limited powers and is miserable; he wants to expand his powers so that he may be happy. But consider if it will be so; if with limited perceptions one

is miserable, with extended perceptions the misery must increase proportionately. Occult powers will not bring happiness to anyone, but will make him all the more miserable!

Moreover what are these powers for? The would-be occultist (*siddha*) desires to display the *siddhis* so that others may appreciate him. He seeks appreciation, and if it is not forthcoming he will not be happy. There must be others to appreciate him. He may even find another possessor of higher powers. That will cause jealousy and breed unhappiness. The higher occultist (*siddha*) may meet a still higher *siddha* and so on until there will come one who will blow up everything in a trice. Such is the highest adept (*siddha*) and He is God or the Self.

Which is the real power? Is it to increase prosperity or bring about peace? That which results in peace is the highest perfection (*siddhi*).

D.: But common people in Europe and America would not appreciate such an attitude and would desire a display of powers and instructions by lectures, etc.

M.: Lectures may entertain individuals for a few hours without improving them. Silence on the other hand is permanent and benefits the whole of humanity.

D.: But silence is not understood.

M.: It does not matter. By silence, eloquence is meant. Oral lectures are not so eloquent as silence. Silence is unceasing eloquence. The Primal Master, Dakshinamurti, is the ideal. He taught his *rishi* disciples by silence.

D.: But then there were disciples for Him. It was all right. Now it is different. They must be sought after and helped.

M.: That is a sign of ignorance. The power which created you has created the world. If it can take care of you, it can similarly take care of the world also.

D.: What does Bhagavan think of the “lost soul” mentioned by Jesus Christ?

M.: Think what there is to be lost. Is there anything to lose? What matters is only that which is natural. Such must be eternal and

cannot be experienced. That which is born must die; that which is acquired must be lost. Were you born? You are ever existent. The Self can never be lost.

D.: Buddha advises the eight-fold path as being the best so that none might be lost.

M.: Yes. Such is called Raja Yoga by the Hindus.

D.: Is yoga advised for a spiritual aspirant?

M.: Yoga helps control of mind.

D.: But does it not lead to occult powers (*siddhis*) which are said to be dangerous?

M.: But you qualified your question by the words "a spiritual aspirant". You did not mean a seeker of powers (*siddhis*).

31st January, 1935

Talk 21.

Mr. Ellappa Chettiar, a member of the Legislative Council of Madras Presidency and an influential Hindu, asked: "Why is it said that the knowledge born of hearing is not firm, whereas that born of contemplation is firm?"

M.: On the other hand it is said that hearsay knowledge (*paroksha*) is not firm, whereas that born of one's own realisation (*aparoksha*) is firm.

It is also said that hearing helps the intellectual understanding of the Truth, that meditation makes the understanding clear, and finally that contemplation brings about realisation of the Truth.

Furthermore, they say also that all such knowledge is not firm and that it is firm only when it is as clear and intimate as a gooseberry in the hollow of one's palm.

There are those who affirm that hearing alone will suffice, because a competent person who had already, perhaps in previous incarnations, qualified himself, realises and abides in peace as soon as he hears the Truth told him only once, whereas the person not so qualified must pass through the stages prescribed above, before falling into *samadhi*.

Talk 22.

Mrs. Piggott returned from Madras for a further visit. She asked questions relating to diet regulation.

D.: What diet is prescribed for a *sadhak* (one who is engaged in spiritual practices)?

M.: Satvic food in limited quantities.

D.: What is *satvic* food?

M.: Bread, fruits, vegetables, milk, etc.

D.: Some people take fish in North India. May it be done?

No answer was made by the Maharshi.

D.: We Europeans are accustomed to a particular diet; change of diet affects health and weakens the mind. Is it not necessary to keep up physical health?

M.: Quite necessary. The weaker the body the stronger the mind grows.

D.: In the absence of our usual diet our health suffers and the mind loses strength.

M.: What do you mean by strength of mind?

D.: The power to eliminate worldly attachment.

M.: The quality of food influences the mind. The mind feeds on the food consumed.

D.: Really! How can the Europeans adjust themselves to *satvic* food only?

M.: (Pointing to Mr. Evans-Wentz) You have been taking our food. Do you feel uncomfortable on that account?

Mr. Evans-Wentz: No. Because I am accustomed to it.

D.: What about those not so accustomed?

M.: Habit is only adjustment to the environment. It is the mind that matters. The fact is that the mind has been trained to think certain foods tasty and good. The food material is to be had both in vegetarian and non-vegetarian diet equally well. But the mind desires such food as it is accustomed to and considers tasty.

D.: Are there restrictions for the realised man in a similar manner?

M.: No. He is steady and not influenced by the food he takes.

D.: Is it not killing life to prepare meat diet?

M.: Ahimsa stands foremost in the code of discipline for the yogis.

D.: Even plants have life.

M.: So too the slabs you sit on!

D.: May we gradually get ourselves accustomed to vegetarian food?

M.: Yes. That is the way.

2nd February, 1935

Talk 23.

Mr. Evans-Wentz continued another day: "May one have more than one spiritual master?"

M.: Who is a Master? He is the Self after all. According to the stages of the development of the mind the Self manifests as the Master externally. The famous ancient saint Avadhuta said that he had more than 24 Masters. The Master is one from whom one learns anything. The Guru may be sometimes inanimate also, as in the case of Avadhuta. God, Guru and the Self are identical.

A spiritual-minded man thinks that God is all-pervading and takes God for his Guru. Later, God brings him in contact with a personal Guru and the man recognises him as all in all. Lastly the same man is made by the grace of the Master to feel that his Self is the Reality and nothing else. Thus he finds that the Self is the Master.

D.: Does Sri Bhagavan initiate his disciples?

Maharshi kept silent.

Thereafter one of the devotees took it upon himself to answer, saying, "Maharshi does not see anyone as outside his Self. So there are no disciples for him. His Grace is all-pervading and He communicates his Grace to any deserving individual in silence."

D.: How does book-lore help in Self-Realisation?

A.: Only so far as to make one spiritually-minded.

D.: How far does intellect help?

A.: Only so far as to make one sink the intellect in the ego, and the ego in the Self.

4th February, 1935

Talk 24.

Mrs. Piggott: Why do you take milk, but not eggs?

M.: The domesticated cows yield more milk than necessary for their calves and they find it a pleasure to be relieved of the milk.

D.: But the hen cannot contain the eggs?

M.: But there are potential lives in them.

D.: Thoughts cease suddenly, then 'I-I' rises up as suddenly and continues. It is only in the feeling and not in the intellect. Can it be right?

M.: It is certainly right. Thoughts must cease and reason disappear for 'I-I' to rise up and be felt. Feeling is the prime factor and not reason.

D.: Moreover it is not in the head but in the right side of the chest.

M.: It ought to be so. Because the heart is there.

D.: When I see outside it disappears. What is to be done?

M.: It must be held tight.

D.: If one is active with such remembrance, will the actions be always right?

M.: They ought to be. However, such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of his actions. Such a person's actions are God's and therefore they must be right.

D.: Why then the restrictions of food given for such?

M.: Your present experience is due to the influence of the atmosphere you are in. Can you have it outside this atmosphere? The experience is spasmodic. Until it becomes permanent practice is necessary. Restrictions of food are aids for such experience to be repeated. After one gets established in truth the restrictions drop away naturally. Moreover, food influences the mind and it must be kept pure.

The lady told a disciple later: "I feel the vibrations from him more intensely and I am able to reach the 'I' centre more readily than before."

Talk 25.

On a former occasion B. V. Narasimha Swami, author of *Self-Realization*, asked: Who am I? How is it to be found?

M.: Ask yourself the question. The body (*annamaya kosa*) and its functions are not 'I'.

Going deeper, the mind (*manomaya kosa*) and its functions are not 'I'.

The next step takes on to the question. "Wherefrom do these thoughts arise?" The thoughts are spontaneous, superficial or analytical. They operate in intellect. Then, who is aware of them? The existence of thoughts, their clear conceptions and their operations become evident to the individual. The analysis leads to the conclusion that the individuality of the person is operative as the perceiver of the existence of thoughts and of their sequence. This individuality is the ego, or as people say 'I'. *Vijnanamaya kosa* (intellect) is only the sheath of 'I' and not the 'I' itself.

Enquiring further the questions arise, "Who is this 'I'? Wherefrom does it come?" 'I' was not aware in sleep. Simultaneously with its rise sleep changes to dream or wakefulness. But I am not concerned with dream just now. Who am I now, in the wakeful state? If I originated from sleep, then the 'I' was covered up with ignorance. Such an ignorant 'I' cannot be what the scriptures say or the wise ones affirm. 'I' am beyond even 'Sleep'; 'I' must be now and here and what I was all along in sleep and dreams also, without the qualities of such states. 'I' must therefore be the unqualified substratum underlying these three states (*anandamaya kosa* transcended).

'I' is, in brief, beyond the five sheaths. Next, the residuum left over after discarding all that is not-self is the Self, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

D.: How is that Self to be known or realised?

M.: Transcend the present plane of relativity. A separate being (Self) appears to know something apart from itself (non-Self). That is, the subject is aware of the object. The seer is *drik*; the seen is *drisya*.

There must be a unity underlying these two, which arises as 'ego'. This ego is of the nature of *chit* (intelligence); *achit* (insentient object) is only negation of *chit*. Therefore the underlying essence is

akin to the subject and not the object. Seeking the *drik*, until all *drisya* disappears, the *drik* will become subtler and subtler until the absolute *drik* alone survives. This process is called *drisya vilaya* (the disappearance of the objective world).

D.: Why should the objects *drisya* be eliminated? Cannot the Truth be realised even keeping the object as it is?

M.: No. Elimination of *drisya* means elimination of separate identities of the subject and object. The object is unreal. All *drisya* (including ego) is the object. Eliminating the unreal, the Reality survives. When a rope is mistaken for a snake, it is enough to remove the erroneous perception of the snake for the truth to be revealed. Without such elimination the truth will not dawn.

D.: When and how is the disappearance of the objective world (*drisya vilaya*) to be effected?

M.: It is complete when the relative subject, namely the mind, is eliminated. The mind is the creator of the subject and the object and is the cause of the dualistic idea. Therefore, it is the cause of the wrong notion of limited self and the misery consequent on such erroneous idea.

D.: What is this mind?

M.: Mind is one form of manifestation of life. A block of wood or a subtle machine is not called mind. The vital force manifests as life-activity and also as the conscious phenomena known as the mind.

D.: What is the relation between mind and object? Is the mind contacting something different from it, *viz.*, the world?

M.: The world is 'sensed' in the waking and the dream states or is the object of perception and thought, both being mental activities. If there were no such activities as waking and dreaming thought, there would be no 'perception' or inference of a 'world'. In sleep there is no such activity and 'objects and world' do not exist for us in sleep. Hence 'reality of the world' may be created by the ego by its act of emergence from sleep; and that reality may be swallowed up or disappear by the soul resuming its nature in sleep. The emergence and disappearance of the world are like the spider producing a gossamer web and then withdrawing it. The spider here underlies all

the three states - waking, dreaming, and sleep; such a spider in the person is called *Atman* (Self), whereas the same with reference to the world (which is considered to issue from the sun) is called Brahman (Supreme Spirit). He that is in man is the same as He that is in the sun. (*Sa yaschayam purushe yaschasavaditye sa ekah*).

While Self or Spirit is unmanifest and inactive, there are no relative doubles; *e.g.*, subject and object - *drik* and *drisya*. If the enquiry into the ultimate cause of manifestation of mind itself is pushed on, mind will be found to be only the manifestation of the Real which is otherwise called Atman or Brahman. The mind is termed *sukshma sarira* or 'subtle-body'; and *jiva* is the individual soul. The *jiva* is the essence of the growth of individuality; personality is referred to as *jiva*. Thought or mind is said to be its phase, or one of the ways in which the *jiva* manifests itself - the earlier stage or phase of such manifestation being vegetative life. This mind is always seen as being related to, or acting on, some non-mind or matter, and never by itself. Therefore mind and matter co-exist.

Talk 26.

D.: How shall we discover the nature of the mind *i.e.*, its ultimate cause, or the noumenon of which it is a manifestation?

M.: Arranging thoughts in the order of value, the 'I' thought is the all-important thought. Personality-idea or thought is also the root or the stem of all other thoughts, since each idea or thought arises only as someone's thought and is not known to exist independently of the ego. The ego therefore exhibits thought-activity. The second and the third persons do not appear except to the first person. Therefore they arise only after the first person appears, so all the three persons seem to rise and sink together. Trace, then, the ultimate cause of 'I' or personality. The 'I' idea arises to an embodied ego and should be related to a body or organism. Has it a location in the body or a special relation to any particular spot, as speech which has its centre in the brain or amativeness in the brain? Similarly, has 'I' got any centre in the brain, blood, or viscera? Thought-life is seen to centre round the brain and the spinal-cord which in turn are fed by the blood circulating in them, carrying food and air duly mixed up which are transformed into nerve matter. Thus, vegetative life - including

circulation, respiration, alimentation, etc. - or vital force, is said to be (or reside in) the core or essence of the organism. Thus the mind may be regarded as the manifestation of vital force which again may be conceived as residing the Heart.

D.: Now for the art of eliminating the mind and developing intuition in its stead, are they two distinct stages with a possible neutral ground which is neither mind nor intuition? Or does the absence of mental activity necessarily involve Self-Realisation?

M.: To the *abhyasi* (practitioner) there are two distinctive stages. There is a neutral ground of sleep, coma, faint, insanity, etc., in which the mental operations either do not exist or consciousness of Self does not prevail.

D.: Taking the first part first, how is the mind to be eliminated or relative consciousness transcended?

M.: The mind is by nature restless. Begin liberating it from its restlessness; give it peace; make it free from distractions; train it to look inward; make this a habit. This is done by ignoring the external world and removing the obstacles to peace of mind.

D.: How is restlessness removed from the mind?

M.: External contacts - contacts with objects other than itself - make the mind restless. Loss of interest in non-Self, (*vairagya*) is the first step. Then the habits of introspection and concentration follow. They are characterised by control of external senses, internal faculties, etc. (*sama*, *dama*, etc.) ending in *samadhi* (undistracted mind).

Talk 27.

D.: How are they practised?

M.: An examination of the ephemeral nature of external phenomena leads to *vairagya*. Hence enquiry (*vichara*) is the first and foremost step to be taken. When *vichara* continues automatically, it results in a contempt for wealth, fame, ease, pleasure, etc. The 'I' thought becomes clearer for inspection. The source of 'I' is the Heart - the final goal. If, however, the aspirant is not temperamentally suited to *Vichara Marga* (to the introspective analytical method), he must develop *bhakti* (devotion) to an ideal - may be God, Guru, humanity

in general, ethical laws, or even the idea of beauty. When one of these takes possession of the individual, other attachments grow weaker, *i.e.*, dispassion (*vairagya*) develops. Attachment for the ideal simultaneously grows and finally holds the field. Thus *ekagrata* (concentration) grows simultaneously and imperceptibly - with or without visions and direct aids.

In the absence of enquiry and devotion, the natural sedative *pranayama* (breath regulation) may be tried. This is known as *Yoga Marga*. If life is imperilled the whole interest centres round the one point, the saving of life. If the breath is held the mind cannot afford to (and does not) jump at its pets - external objects. Thus there is rest for the mind so long as the breath is held. All attention being turned on breath or its regulation, other interests are lost. Again, passions are attended with irregular breathing, whereas calm and happiness are attended with slow and regular breathing. Paroxysm of joy is in fact as painful as one of pain, and both are accompanied by ruffled breaths. Real peace is happiness. Pleasures do not form happiness. The mind improves by practice and becomes finer just as the razor's edge is sharpened by stropping. The mind is then better able to tackle internal or external problems. If an aspirant be unsuited temperamentally for the first two methods and circumstantially (on account of age) for the third method, he must try the Karma *Marga* (doing good deeds, for example, social service). His nobler instincts become more evident and he derives impersonal pleasure. His smaller self is less assertive and has a chance of expanding its good side. The man becomes duly equipped for one of the three aforesaid paths. His intuition may also develop directly by this single method.

D.: Can a line of thought or a series of questions induce Self-hypnotism? Should it not be reduced to a single point analysing the unanalysable, elementary and vaguely perceived and elusive 'I'?

M.: Yes. It is really like gazing into vacancy or a dazzling crystal or light.

D.: Can the mind be fixed to that point? How?

M.: If the mind is distracted, ask the question promptly, "To whom do these distracting thoughts arise?" That takes you back to the 'I' point promptly.

D.: How long can the mind stay or be kept in the Heart?

M.: The period extends by practice.

D.: What happens at the end of the period?

M.: The mind returns to the present normal state. Unity in the Heart is replaced by variety of phenomena perceived. This is called the outgoing mind. The heart-going mind is called the resting mind.

D.: Is all this process merely intellectual or does it exhibit feeling predominantly?

M.: The latter.

D.: How do all thoughts cease when the mind is in the Heart?

M.: By force of will, with strong faith in the truth of the Master's teaching to that effect.

D.: What is the good of this process?

M..: (a) Conquest of the will - development of concentration.

(b) Conquest of passions - development of dispassion.

(c) Increased practice of virtue - (*samatva*) equality to all.

D.: Why should one adopt this self-hypnotism by thinking on the unthinkable point? Why not adopt other methods like gazing into light, holding the breath, hearing music, hearing internal sounds, repetition of the sacred syllable (*Pranava*) or other *mantras*?

M.: Light-gazing stupefies the mind and produces catalepsy of the will for the time being, yet secures no permanent benefit. Breath control benumbs the will for the time being only. Sound-hearing produces similar results - unless the *mantra* is sacred and secures the help of a higher power to purify and raise the thoughts.

Talk 28.

D.: What is the interrelation between regulation of thought and regulation of breath?

M.: Thought (intellectual) and respiration, circulation, etc. (vegetative) activities are both different aspects of the same - the individual life. Both depend upon (or metaphorically 'reside' or 'inhere' in) life. Personality and other ideas spring from it like the vital activity. If respiration or other vital activity is forcibly repressed, thought also

is repressed. If thought is forcibly slowed down and pinned to a point, the vital activity of respiration is slowed down, made even and confined to the lowest level compatible with life. In both cases the distracting variety of thought is temporarily at an end. The interaction is noticeable in other ways also. Take the will to live. That is thought-power. That sustains and keeps up life when other vitality is almost exhausted and delays death. In the absence of such will-power death is accelerated. So thought is said to carry life with it in the flesh and from one fleshy body to another.

D.: Are there any aids to (1) concentration and (2) casting off distractions?

M.: Physically the digestive and other organs are kept free from irritation. Therefore food is regulated both in quantity and quality. Non-irritants are eaten, avoiding chillies, excess of salt, onions, wine, opium, etc. Avoid constipation, drowsiness and excitement, and all foods which induce them. Mentally take interest in one thing and fix the mind on it. Let such interest be all-absorbing to the exclusion of everything else. This is dispassion (*vairagya*) and concentration. God or *mantra* may be chosen. The mind gains strength to grasp the subtle and merge into it.

D.: Distractions result from inherited tendencies. Can they be cast off too?

M.: Yes. Many have done so. Believe it! They did so because they believed they could. *Vasanas* (predispositions) can be obliterated. It is done by concentration on that which is free from *vasanas* and yet is their core.

D.: How long is the practice to continue?

M.: Till success is achieved and until yoga-liberation becomes permanent. Success begets success. If one distraction is conquered the next is conquered and so on, until all are finally conquered. The process is like reducing an enemy's fort by slaying its man-power - one by one, as each issues out.

D.: What is the goal of this process?

M.: Realising the Real.

D.: What is the nature of the Reality?

M.: (a) Existence without beginning or end - eternal.

(b) Existence everywhere, endless, infinite.

(c) Existence underlying all forms, all changes, all forces, all matter and all spirit.

The many change and pass away (phenomena), whereas the One always endures (noumenon).

(d) The one displacing the triads, *i.e.*, the knower, the knowledge and the known. The triads are only appearances in time and space, whereas the Reality lies beyond and behind them. They are like a mirage over the Reality. They are the result of delusion.

D.: If 'I' also be an illusion, who then casts off the illusion?

M.: The 'I' casts off the illusion of 'I' and yet remains as 'I'. Such is the paradox of Self-Realisation. The realised do not see any contradiction in it. Take the case of *bhakti* - I approach Iswara and pray to be absorbed in Him. I then surrender myself in faith and by concentration. What remains afterwards? In place of the original 'I', perfect self-surrender leaves a residuum of God in which the 'I' is lost. This is the highest form of devotion (*parabhakti*), *prapatti*, surrender or the height of *vairagya*.

You give up this and that of 'my' possessions. If you give up 'I' and 'Mine' instead, all are given up at a stroke. The very seed of possession is lost. Thus the evil is nipped in the bud or crushed in the germ itself. Dispassion (*vairagya*) must be very strong to do this. Eagerness to do it must be equal to that of a man kept under water trying to rise up to the surface for his life.

D.: Cannot this trouble and difficulty be lessened with the aid of a Master or an *Ishta Devata* (God chosen for worship)? Cannot they give the power to see our Self as it is - to change us into themselves - to take us into Self-Realisation?

M.: Ishta Devata and Guru are aids - very powerful aids on this path. But an aid to be effective requires your effort also. Your effort is a *sine qua non*. It is you who should see the sun. Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your true nature. Not much aid is required for doing it!

D.: What is the relation between my free-will and the overwhelming might of the Omnipotent?

(a) Is omniscience of God consistent with ego's freewill?

(b) Is omnipotence of God consistent with ego's freewill?

(c) Are the natural laws consistent with God's free-will?

M.: Yes. Free-will is the present appearing to a limited faculty of sight and will. The same ego sees its past activity as falling into a course of 'law' or rules - its own free-will being one of the links in that course of law.

Omnipotence and omniscience of God are then seen by the ego to have acted through the appearance of his own free-will. So he comes to the conclusion that the ego must go by appearances. Natural laws are manifestations of God's will and they have been laid down.

D.: Is the study of science, psychology, physiology, philosophy, etc. helpful for:-

(1) this art of yoga-liberation.

(2) the intuitive grasp of the unity of the Real?

M.: Very little. Some knowledge is needed for yoga and it may be found in books. But practical application is the thing needed, and personal example, personal touch and personal instructions are the most helpful aids. As for the other, a person may laboriously convince himself of the truth to be intuited, *i.e.*, its function and nature, but the actual intuition is akin to feeling and requires practice and personal contact. Mere book learning is not of any great use. After realisation all intellectual loads are useless burdens and are thrown overboard as jetsam. Jettisoning the ego is necessary and natural.

D.: How does dream differ from waking?

M.: In dreams one takes on different bodies, and they re-enter this body when one dreams of sense-contacts.

D.: What is happiness? Is it inhering in the Atman or in the object, or in the contact between the subject and the object? But we do not see happiness in our affairs. When does It actually arise?

M.: When there is contact of a desirable sort or memory thereof, and when there is freedom from undesirable contacts or memory thereof, we say there is happiness. Such happiness is relative and is better called pleasure.

But men want absolute and permanent happiness. This does not reside in objects, but in the Absolute. It is Peace free from pain and pleasure - it is a neutral state.

D.: In what sense is happiness our real nature?

M.: Perfect Bliss is Brahman. Perfect Peace is of the Self. That alone exists and is conscious. The same conclusion is arrived at: (a) judged metaphysically, and (b) inferred by *Bhakti Marga* (Path of Devotion).

We pray to God for Bliss and receive it by Grace. The bestower of bliss must be Bliss itself and also Infinite. Therefore, *Iswara* is the Personal God of infinite power and bliss. Brahman is Bliss, impersonal and absolute. The finite egos, deriving their source from Brahman and then *Iswara,* are in their spiritual nature bliss only. Biologically, an organism functions because such functions are attended with happiness.

It is pleasure that helps our growth; food, exercise, rest, and gregarious qualities. The psychology (and metaphysics) of pleasure is perhaps this; Our nature is primarily one, entire, blissful. Take this as a probable hypothesis. Creation is by the entire Godhead breaking into God and Nature (*maya* or *prakriti*). This *maya* is of two parts: (*para*) - the supporting essence and (*apara*) the five elements, mind, intellect, and ego (eightfold).

Ego's perfection is suddenly broken at a point and a want is felt giving rise to a desire to get something or do something. When that want is cured by the fulfilment of that desire, the ego is happy and the original perfection is restored. Therefore happiness may be said to be our natural condition or nature. Pleasure and pain are relative and refer to our finite state, with progress by satisfaction of want. If relative progress is stopped and the soul merges into Brahman - of the nature of perfect peace - that soul ceases to have relative, temporary pleasure and enjoys perfect peace - Bliss. Hence Self-Realisation is Bliss; it is realizing the Self as the limitless spiritual eye (*jnana dristi*) and not clairvoyance; it is the highest self-surrender. *Samsara* (the world-cycle) is sorrow.

D.: Why then is *samsara* - creation and manifestation as finitised - so full of sorrow and evil?

M.: God's will!

D.: Why does God will it so?

M.: It is inscrutable. No motive can be attributed to that Power - no desire, no end to achieve can be asserted of that one Infinite, All-wise and All-powerful Being. God is untouched by activities, which take place in His presence; compare the sun and the world activities. There is no meaning in attributing responsibility and motive to the One before it becomes many. But God's will for the prescribed course of events is a good solution of the free-will problem (*vexata quaestio*). If the mind is restless on account of a sense of the imperfect and unsatisfactory character of what befalls us or what is committed or omitted by us, then it is wise to drop the sense of responsibility and free-will by regarding ourselves as the ordained instruments of the All-wise and All-powerful, to do and suffer as He pleases. He carries all burdens and gives us peace.

Talk 29.

On another occasion, the evening was calm and cloudy. It was drizzling occasionally and somewhat cool in consequence. The windows of the Asramam Hall were closed and Maharshi was seated as usual on the sofa. Facing him sat the devotees. Some visitors had come from Cuddalore. A Sub-Judge, accompanied by two elderly ladies, was among them. The Sub-Judge began the discussion as to the impermanence of all mundane things, by putting the question. "Has the discrimination between Reality and Unreality (*Sat asat vicharana*) the efficacy in itself to lead us to the realisation of the one Imperishable?"

M.: As propounded by all and realised by all true seekers, fixity in the Supreme Spirit (*Brahma nishta*) alone can make us know and realise it. It being of us and in us, any amount of discrimination (*vivechana*) can lead us only one step forward, by making us renouncers, by goading us to discard the seeming (*abhasa*) as transitory and to hold fast to the eternal truth and presence alone.

The conversation turned upon the question as to whether *Iswara Prasad* (Divine Grace) is necessary for the attaining of *samrajya* (universal dominion) or whether a *jiva's* honest and strenuous efforts to attain it cannot of themselves lead him to That from whence is no return to life and death. The Maharshi with an ineffable smile

which lit up His Holy Face and which was all-pervasive, shining upon the coterie around him, replied in tones of certainty and with the ring of truth; "Divine Grace is essential for Realisation. It leads one to God-realisation. But such Grace is vouchsafed only to him who is a true devotee or a yogin, who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom."

D.: There are six centres mentioned in the Yoga books; but the *jiva* is said to reside in the Heart. Is it not so?

M.: Yes. The *jiva* is said to remain in the Heart in deep sleep; and in the brain in the waking state. The Heart need not be taken to be the muscular cavity with four chambers which propels blood. There are indeed passages which support the view. There are others who take it to mean a set of ganglia or nerve centres about that region. Whichever view is correct does not matter to us. We are not concerned with anything less than ourselves. That we have certainly within us. There could be no doubts or discussions about that.

The Heart is used in the Vedas and the scriptures to denote the place whence the notion 'I' springs. Does it spring only from the fleshy ball? It springs within us somewhere right in the middle of our being. The 'I' has no location. Everything is the Self. There is nothing but that. So the Heart must be said to be the entire body of ourselves and of the entire universe, conceived as 'I'. But to help the practiser (*abhyasi*) we have to indicate a definite part of the Universe, or of the Body. So this Heart is pointed out as the seat of the Self. But in truth we are everywhere, we are all that is, and there is nothing else.

D.: It is said that Divine Grace is necessary to attain successful undistracted mind (*samadhi*). Is that so?

M.: We are God (*Iswara*). *Iswara Drishti* (*i.e.*, seeing ourselves as God) is itself Divine Grace. So we need Divine Grace to get God's Grace.

Maharshi smiles and all devotees laugh together.

D.: There is also Divine Favour (*Iswara anugraham*) as distinct from Divine Grace (*Iswara prasadam*). Is that so?

M.: The thought of God is Divine Favour! He is by nature Grace (*prasad* or *arul*). It is by God's Grace that you think of God.

D.: Is not the Master's Grace the result of God's Grace?

M.: Why distinguish between the two? The Master is the same as God and not different from him.

D.: When an endeavour is made to lead the right life and to concentrate thought on the Self, there is often a downfall and break. What is to be done?

M.: It will come all right in the end. There is the steady impulse of your determination that sets you on your feet again after every downfall and breakdown. Gradually the obstacles are all overcome and your current becomes stronger. Everything comes right in the end. Steady determination is what is required.

Talk 30.

Mr. N. Natesa Iyer, the leader of the Bar in a South Indian town, an orthodox Brahmin, asked: "Are the gods *Iswara* or *Vishnu* and their sacred regions *Kailasa* or *Vaikuntha* real?

M.: As real as you are in this body.

D.: Do they possess a *vyavahara satya*, *i.e.*, phenomenal existence, like my body? Or are they fictions like the horn of a hare?

M.: They do exist.

D.: If so, they must be somewhere. Where are they?

M.: Persons who have seen them say that they exist somewhere. So we must accept their statement.

D.: Where do they exist?

M.: In you.

D.: Then it is only idea - that which I can create and control?

M.: Everything is like that.

D.: But I can create pure fictions *e.g.*, hare's horn or only part truths, *e.g*. mirage, while there are also facts irrespective of my imagination. Do the gods *Iswara* or *Vishnu* exist like that?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is He subject to *pralaya* (cosmic dissolution)?

M.: Why? Man becoming aware of the Self transcends cosmic dissolution (*pralaya*) and becomes liberated (*mukta*). Why not God (*Iswara*) who is infinitely wiser and abler?

D.: Do *devas* and *pisachas* (devils) exist similarly?

M.: Yes.

D.: How are we to conceive of Supreme Consciousness (*Chaitanya Brahman*)?

M.: As that which is.

D.: Should it be thought of as Self-Effulgent?

M.: It transcends light and darkness. An individual (*jiva*) sees both. The Self enlightens the individual to see light and darkness.

D.: Should it be realised as "I am not the body, nor the agent, nor the enjoyer, etc."?

M.: Why these thoughts? Do we now think that we are men, etc.? By not thinking so, do we cease to be men?

D.: Should one realise it then by the scriptural text such as "There are no differences here".

नेह नानास्ति किंचन

M.: Why even that?

D.: If we think "I am the real," will it do?

M.: All thoughts are inconsistent with realisation. The correct state is to exclude thoughts of ourselves and all other thoughts. Thought is one thing and realisation is quite another.

D.: Is it not necessary or at least advantageous to render the body invisible in one's spiritual progress?

M.: Why do you think of that? Are you the body?

D.: No. But advanced spirituality must effect a change in the body. Is it not so?

M.: What change do you desire in the body, and why?

D.: Is not invisibility evidence of advanced Wisdom (*jnana*)?

M.: In that case, all those who spoke, who wrote and who passed their lives in the sight of others must be considered ignorant (*ajnanis*)!

D.: But the sages Vasistha and Valmiki possessed such powers?

M.: It might have been their fate (*prarabdha*) to develop such powers (*siddhis*) side by side with their wisdom (*jnana*). Why should you aim at that which is not essential but apt to prove a hindrance

to wisdom (*jnana*)? Does the Sage (*jnani*) feel oppressed by his body being visible?

D.: No.

M.: A hypnotist can render himself suddenly invisible. Is he therefore a Sage (*jnani*)?

D.: No.

M.: Visibility and invisibility refer to a seer. Who is that seer? Solve that first. Other matters are unimportant.

D.: The Vedas contain conflicting accounts of Cosmogony. Ether is said to be the first creation in one place; vital energy (*prana*) in another place; something else in yet another; water in still another, and so on. How are these to be reconciled? Do not these impair the credibility of the Vedas?

M.: Different seers saw different aspects of truths at different times, each emphasising some one view. Why do you worry about their conflicting statements? The essential aim of the Veda is to teach us the nature of the imperishable Atman and show us that we are That.

D.: I am satisfied with that portion.

M.: Then treat all the rest as *artha vada* (auxiliary arguments) or expositions for the sake of the ignorant who seek to trace the genesis of things and matters.

D.: I am a sinner. I do not perform religious sacrifices (*homas*), etc. Shall I have painful rebirths for that reason? Pray save me!

M.: Why do you say that you are a sinner? Your trust in God is sufficient to save you from rebirths. Cast all burden on Him.

In the *Tiruvachagam* it is said: "Though I am worse than a dog, you have graciously undertaken to protect me. This delusion of birth and death is maintained by you. Moreover, am I the person to sift and judge? Am I the Lord here? Oh Maheswara! It is for you to roll me through bodies (by births and deaths) or to keep me fixed at your own feet." Therefore have faith and that will save you.

D.: Sir, I have faith - and still I encounter difficulties. Weakness and giddiness afflict me after I practise concentration.

M.: Breath-control (*pranayama*) properly performed should increase one's strength.

D.: I have my professional work and yet I want to be in perpetual *dhyana*. Will they conflict with each other?

M.: There will be no conflict. As you practise both and develop your powers you will be able to attend to both. You will begin to look on business as a dream. Says the Bhagavad Gita: “That which is the night of all beings, for the disciplined man is the time of waking; when other beings are waking, then is it night for the sage who seeth.” (11.69.)

Talk 31.

A visitor asked: What to do to get liberation (*moksha*)?

M.: Learn what liberation is.

D.: Should I do worship (*upasana*) for it?

M.: Worship is for mind control (*chitta nirodha*) and concentration.

D.: Should I do idol worship? Is there any harm in it?

M.: So long as you think you are the body there is no harm.

D.: How to get over the cycle of births and deaths?

M.: Learn what it means.

D.: Should I not leave my wife and family?

M.: How do they harm you? First find out who you are.

D.: Should not one give up wife, wealth, home?

M.: Learn first what *samsara* is. Is all that *samsara*? Have there not been men living among them and getting realisation?

D.: What are the steps of practical training (*sadhana*) for it?

M.: It depends on the qualifications and the nature of the seeker.

D.: I am doing idol worship.

M.: Go on with it. It leads to concentration of mind. Get one-pointed. All will come out right. People think that freedom (*moksha*) is somewhere yonder and should be sought out. They are wrong. Freedom (*moksha*) is only knowing the Self within yourself. Concentrate and you will get it. Your mind is the cycle of births and deaths (*samsara*).

D.: My mind is very unsteady. What should I do?

M.: Fix your attention on any single thing and try to hold on to it. All will be right.

D.: I find concentration difficult.

M.: Go on practising. Your concentration will be as easy as breathing. That will be the crown of your achievements.

D.: Are not abstinence and pure food helpful?

M.: Yes, all that is good. (Then Maharshi concentrates and silently gazes at vacancy, and thus sets an example to the questioner).

D.: Do I not require Yoga?

M.: What is it but the means to concentration?

D.: To help concentration, is it not good to have some aids?

M.: Breath-regulation, etc., are such helps.

D.: Is it not possible to get a vision of God?

M.: Yes. You see this and that. Why not see God? Only you must know what God is. All are seeing God always. But they do not know it. You find out what God is. People see, yet see not, because they know not God.

D.: Should I not go on with repetition of sacred syllables, (*mantra japa*), *e.g.*, Krishna or Rama's name, when I worship images?

M.: Mental *japa* is very good. That helps meditation. Mind gets identified with the repetition and then you get to know what worship (*puja*) really is - the losing of one's individuality in that which is worshipped.

D.: Is the Universal Soul (*Paramatma*) always different from us?

M.: That is the common belief, but it is wrong. Think of Him as not different from you, and then you achieve identity of Self with God.

D.: Is it not the *Advaita* doctrine to become one with God?

M.: Where is becoming? The thinker is all the while the Real. He ultimately realises the fact. Sometimes we forget our identities, as in sleep and dreams. But God is perpetual consciousness.

D.: Is not the Master's guidance necessary, besides idol worship?

M.: How did you start it without advice?

D.: From sacred books (*puranas*).

M.: Yes. Someone tells you of God, or Bhagavan Himself tells you. In the latter case God Himself is your Master. What matters it who the Master is? We really are one with Master or Bhagavan. The Master is God; one discovers it in the end. There is no difference between human-guru and God-guru.

D.: If we have done virtuous action (*punya*) the achievement will not leave us. I hope.

M.: You will reap your destiny (*prarabdha*) that way.

D.: Will not a Wise Master be a great help in pointing out the way?

M.: Yes. If you go on working with the light available, you will meet your Master, as he himself will be seeking you.

D.: Is there a difference between *prapatti* (self-surrender) and the Path of Yoga of the Seers?

M.: Jnana Marga and *Bhakti Marga* (*prapatti*) are one and the same. Self-surrender leads to realisation just as enquiry does. Complete self-surrender means that you have no further thought of 'I'. Then all your predispositions (*samskaras*) are washed off and you are free. You should not continue as a separate entity at the end of either course.

D.: Do not we go to Heaven (*svarga*), etc. as the result of our actions?

M.: That is as true as the present existence. But if we enquire who we are and discover the Self, what need is there to think of heaven, etc.?

D.: Should I not try to escape rebirth?

M.: Yes. Find out who is born and who has the trouble of existence now. When you are asleep do you think of rebirths or even the present existence, etc.? So find out whence the present problem arises and there is the solution also. You will discover that there is no birth, no present trouble or unhappiness, etc. All is That; All is Bliss; we are freed from rebirth in fact. Why fret over the misery of rebirth?

Talk 32.

A visitor: The saints Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna wept before God and achieved success. Is that not the path to follow?

M.: Yes. There was a powerful force (*sakti*) drawing them on through all those experiences. Trust in that huge power to take you on to

your goal. Tears are often considered a sign of weakness. These great persons were certainly not weak. These manifestations are only passing signs of the great current carrying them on. We must look to the end achieved.

D.: Can this physical body be made to disappear into nothingness?

M.: Why this question? Can you not find out if you are the body?

D.: Can we have disappearance from sight (*antardhana*) like the yogis Vasishta or Viswamitra?

M.: These are only physical matters. Is that the essential object of our interest? Are you not the Self? Why trouble about other matters? Take the essence; reject other learned theories as useless. They who think that physical disappearance counts in freedom are mistaken. No such thing is needed. You are not the body; what does it matter if it disappears in one way or another? There is no great merit in such phenomena. In what does superiority or inferiority consist? Achievement of the Real alone matters. The loss of the 'I' is the main fact, and not the loss of the body. Identity of the Self with the body is the real bondage. Leave off the false notion and perceive intuitively the Real. That alone matters. If you melt a gold ornament before testing it to be gold, what matters it how it is melted, whole or in parts, or of what shape the ornament was? All that you are interested in is if it is gold. The dead man sees not his body. It is the survivor that thinks about the manner in which the body is parted from. The realised have no death with or without the body, the realised man is equally aware and sees no difference. To him the one state is not superior to the other. To an outsider also the fortunes of a liberated one's body need not be of any concern; mind your business. Realise the Self; after realisation there will be time to think of what form of death is preferable to you.

It is the false identity of the Self with the body that causes the idea of preference, etc. Are you the body? Were you aware of it when you were fast asleep last night? No! What is it that exists now and troubles you? It is 'I'. Get rid of it and be happy.

Talk 33.

A visitor: "The Supreme Spirit (Brahman) is Real. The world (*jagat*) is illusion," is the stock phrase of Sri Sankaracharya. Yet others say, "The world is reality". Which is true?

M.: Both statements are true. They refer to different stages of development and are spoken from different points of view. The aspirant (*abhyasi*) starts with the definition, that which is real exists always; then he eliminates the world as unreal because it is changing. It cannot be real; 'not this, not this!' The seeker ultimately reaches the Self and there finds unity as the prevailing note. Then, that which was originally rejected as being unreal is found to be a part of the unity. Being absorbed in the Reality, the world also is Real. There is only being in Self-Realisation, and nothing but being. Again Reality is used in a different sense and is applied loosely by some thinkers to objects. They say that the reflected (*adhyasika*) Reality admits of degrees which are named:

(1) *Vyavaharika satya* (everyday life) - this chair is seen by me and is real.

(2) *Pratibhasika satya* (illusory) - Illusion of a serpent in a coiled rope. The appearance is real to the man who thinks so. This phenomenon appears at a point of time and under certain circumstances.

(3) *Paramartika satya* (ultimate) - Reality is that which remains the same always and without change.

If Reality be used in the wider sense the world may be said to have the everyday life and illusory degrees (*vyavaharika* and *pratibhasika satya*). Some, however, deny even the reality of practical life - *vyavaharika satya* and consider it to be only projection of the mind. According to them it is only *pratibhasika satya*, *i.e.*, an illusion.

YOGI RAMIAH'S ACCOUNT OF HIS EXPERIENCES

Talk 34.

Sitting in Maharshi's presence brings peace of mind. I used to sit in *samadhi* for three or four hours together. Then I felt my mind took a form and came out from within. By constant practice and meditation it entered the Heart and was merged into it. I conclude that the Heart is the resting place of mind. The result is peace. When the mind is absorbed in the Heart, the Self is realised. This could be felt even at the stage of concentration (*dharana*).

I asked Maharshi about contemplation. He taught me as follows:- When a man dies the funeral pyre is prepared and the body is laid flat on the pyre. The pyre is lit. The skin is burnt, then the flesh and then the bones until the whole body falls to ashes. What remains thereafter? The mind. The question arises, ‘How many are there in this body - one or two?’ If two, why do people say ‘I’ and not ‘we’? There is therefore only one. Whence is it born? What is its nature (*swaroopa*)? Enquiring thus the mind also disappears. Then what remains over is seen to be ‘I’. The next question is ‘Who am I?’ The Self alone. This is contemplation. It is how I did it. By this process attachment to the body (*dehavasana*) is destroyed. The ego vanishes. Self alone shines. One method of getting mind-dissolution (*manolaya*) is association with great ones - the yoga adepts (Yoga *arudhas*). They are perfect adepts in *samadhi*. Self-Realisation has been easy, natural, and perpetual to them. Those moving with them closely and in sympathetic contact gradually absorb the *samadhi* habit from them.

Talk 35.

An educated visitor asked Bhagavan about *dvaita* and *advaita*.

M.: Identification with the body is *dvaita*. Non-identification is *advaita*.

Talk 36.

An aristocratic and distinguished lady visitor from the North accompanied by her Private Secretary arrived at noon, waited a few minutes and asked Maharshi soon after he returned to the hall after lunch:

D.: Maharajji, can we see the dead?

M.: Yes.

D.: Can the yogis show them to us?

M.: Yes. They may. But do not ask me to show them to you. For I cannot.

D.: Do you see them?

M.: Yes, in dreams.

D.: Can we realise the goal through yoga?

M.: Yes.

D.: Have you written on yoga? Are there books on the subject by you?

M.: Yes.

After she left the Master observed: "Did we know our relatives before their birth that we should know them after their death?"

Talk 37.

"What is Karma?" asked someone.

M.: That which has already begun to bear fruit is classified as *prarabdha* Karma (past action). That which is in store and will later bear fruit is classified as *sanchita* Karma (accumulated action). This is multifarious like the grain obtained by villagers as barter for cress (greens). Such bartered grain consists of rice, ragi, barley, etc., some floating on, others sinking in water. Some of it may be good, bad or indifferent. When the most potent of the multifarious accumulated karma begins to bear fruit in the next birth it is called the *prarabdha* of that birth.

Talk 38.

When one of the present attendants came the first time to Bhagavan, he asked: "What is the way for liberation?" Maharshi replied: "The way already taken leads to liberation."

22nd September, 1936

Talk 39.

Conversing with R. Seshagiri Rao, a visitor, Maharshi remarked that a Self-Realised sage (*Atma jnani*) alone can be a good Karma yogi. "After the sense of doership has gone let us see what happens. Sri Sankara advised inaction. But did he not write commentaries and take part in disputation? Do not trouble about doing action or otherwise. Know Thyself. Then let us see whose action it is. Whose is it? Let action complete itself. So long as there is the doer he must reap the fruits of his action. If he does not think himself the doer there is no action for him. He is an ascetic who has renounced worldly life (*sanyasin*)."

D.: How did the ego arise?

M.: It is not necessary to know it. Know the present. Not knowing that, why do you worry about other times?

Maharshi said in reply to a question: "Is the world within you or without you? Does it exist apart from you? Does the world come and tell you 'I exist'?"

Talk 40.

The Brahmin questioner resumed: "How do we know that action is ours or not?"

M.: If the fruits of actions do not affect the person he is free from action.

D.: Is intellectual knowledge enough?

M.: Unless intellectually known, how to practice it? Learn it intellectually first, then do not stop with that. Practise it.

Maharshi then made certain remarks: "When you adhere to one philosophical system (*siddhanta*) you are obliged to condemn the others. That is the case with the heads of monasteries (*matadhipatis*)".

All people cannot be expected to do the same kind of action. Each one acts according to his temperament and past lives. Wisdom, Devotion, Action (*jnana*, *bhakti*, *karma*) are all interlocked. Meditation on forms is according to one's own mind. It is meant for ridding oneself of other forms and confining oneself to one form. It leads to the goal. It is impossible to fix the mind in the Heart to start with. So these aids are necessary. Krishna says that there is no birth (*janma*) to you, me, etc., and later says he was born before Aditya, etc. Arjuna disputes it. Therefore it is certain that each one thinks of God according to his own degree of advancement.

You say you are the body in wakeful state; not the body in sleep. Bodies being several-fold for an individual, should not there be infinite capacities for God? Whichever method one follows, that method is encouraged by the Sages. For it leads to the goal like any other method.

Talk 41.

D.: Are there heaven (*swarga*) and hell (*naraka*)?

M.: There must be someone to go there. They are like dreams. We see time and space exist in dream also. Which is true, dream or wakefulness?

D.: So we must rid ourselves of lust (*kama*), anger, (*krodha*), etc.

M.: Give up thoughts. You need not give up anything else. You must be there to see anything. It is the Self. Self is ever-conscious.

D.: Are pilgrimages, etc., good?

M.: Yes.

D.: What effort is necessary for reaching the Self?

M.: 'I' should be destroyed. Self is not to be reached. Is there any moment when Self is not? It is not new. Be as you are. What is new cannot be permanent. What is real must always exist.

D.: What is sacrifice through wisdom (*jnana yajna*) or other sacrifices?

M.: Other disciplines exist for it. Practice is for gaining wisdom (*jnana*).

D.: Are *jivanmuktas* (living liberated souls) of different kinds?

M.: What does it matter if they differ externally? There is no difference in their wisdom (*jnana*).

D.: When loyal to one Master can you respect others?

M.: Guru is only one. He is not physical. So long as there is weakness the support of strength is needed.

D.: J. Krishnamurti says, "No Guru is necessary?"

M.: How did he know it? One can say so after realising but not before.

D.: You have gained this state by great effort. What shall we poor souls do?

M.: We are in our Self. We are not in the world.

D.: Heaven and hell - what are they?

M.: You carry heaven and hell with you. Your lust, anger, etc., produce these regions. They are like dreams.

D.: The Gita says that if a man fixes his attention between the eyebrows and holds his breath he reaches the Supreme state. How is that done?

M.: You are always in the Self and there is no reaching it. The eyebrow is only a place where attention is to be fixed (seat of meditation - *upasanasthana*).

D.: You have spoken of the Heart as the seat of meditation?

M.: Yes, it is also that.

D.: What is Heart?

M.: It is the centre of the Self. The Self is the centre of centres. The Heart represents the psychic centre and not the physical centre.

D.: The term '*jnana*' is realised Wisdom. The same term is used for the method also. Why?

M.: '*Jnana*' includes the method also because it ultimately results in realisation.

D.: Is a man to engage in teaching his knowledge however imperfect?

M.: If his *prarabdha* be that way.

In the seventh chapter, Arjuna asks if Karma is a method (*sadhana*). Krishna answers that it is so if done without the sense of doership.

So also are Karmas approved by scriptures which deny Karma. The Karma disapproved by them is that which is done with the sense of doership. Do not leave Karma. You cannot do so. Give up the sense of doership. Karma will go on automatically. Or Karma will drop away from you. If Karma be your lot according to *prarabdha*, it will surely be done whether you will it or not; if Karma be not your lot, it will not be done even if you intently engage in it. Janaka, Suka, etc., were also in work without *ahankara*, Karma may be done for fame, or may be done unselfishly and for the public good. Yet even then they want applause. So it is really selfish.

D.: What is that one thing, knowing which all doubts are solved?

M.: Know the doubter. If the doubter be held, the doubts will not arise. *Here the doubter is transcendent*. Again when the doubter ceases to exist, there will be no doubts arising. From where will they arise? All are *jnanis*, *jivanmuktas*. Only they are not aware of the fact. Doubts must be uprooted. This means that the doubter must be uprooted. Here the doubter is the mind.

D.: What is the method?

M.: 'Who am I?' is the investigation.

D.: May we perform *japa*?

M.: Why should you think I am this? Investigate and the thoughts cease. What is, namely the Self, will be revealed as the inescapable residue.

D.: Is *hatha yoga* necessary?

M.: It is one of the aids - not that it is always necessary. It depends upon the person. *Vichara* surpasses *pranayama*. In *Yoga Vasishta* Chudala advises investigation (*vichara*) to Sikhidvaja for killing the ego.

Reality can be reached by holding on to *prana* or intellect. *Hatha yoga* is the former; *Vichara* is the latter.

D.: Is there any individuality for the *jnani* after Realization?

M.: How can he retain individuality?

Even ordinarily the elders advise *achamana* and *pranayama* before undertaking any work - be it worldly or other-worldly. That means, concentration of mind accomplishes the work.

D.: I meditate *neti-neti* (not this - not this).

M.: No - that is not meditation. Find the source. You must reach the source without fail. The false 'I' will disappear and the real 'I' will be realised. The former cannot exist apart from the latter.

24th September, 1936

Talk 42.

Mr. Duncan Greenlees, Madanapalli, wrote as follows:- One has at times had vivid flashes of a consciousness whose centre is outside the normal self and which seems to be inclusive. Without concerning the mind with philosophical concepts, how would Bhagavan advise us to work towards getting, retaining and extending those flashes? Does *abhyasa* in such experiences involve retirement?

Sri Bhagavan answered: 'Outside' - For whom is inside or outside? They can be only so long as there are the subject and object. For

whom are these two again? They both will resolve into the subject only. See who is in the subject. The investigation leads you to pure consciousness beyond the subject.

Normal self is the mind. This mind is with limitations. But pure consciousness is beyond limitations and reached by investigation as above outlined.

Getting - Self is always there. One seeks to destroy the obstacles to the revelation of the Self.

Retaining - Having once gained the Self it will be understood to be Here and Now. It is never lost.

Extending - There is no extending the Self, for it is always without contraction or expansion.

Retirement - Abiding in the Self is solitude. Because there is nothing alien to the Self. Retirement must be from some one place to another. There is neither the one nor the other apart from the Self. All being the Self, retirement is impossible and inconsistent.

Abhyasa is investigation into the Self.

28th March, 1935

Talk 43.

Mr. S. Ranganathan, I.C.S., Collector of Vellore, Mr. S. V. Ramamurthi, I.C.S. and Mr. T. Raghaviah, late Diwan of Pudukottah State, visited the Asramam. Mr. Ranganathan asked, "Kindly instruct me as to how the mind may be controlled."

M.: There are two methods. The one is to see what the mind is; then it subsides. The second is to fix your attention on something; then the mind remains quiet.

The questioner repeated the question for further elucidation. The same answer was returned with a little more added. The questioner did not look satisfied.

Mr. Raghaviah: Men of the world that we are, we have some kind of grief or another and do not know how to get over it. We pray to God and still are not satisfied. What can we do?

M.: Trust God.

D.: We surrender; but still there is no help.

M.: Yes. If you have surrendered, you must be able to abide by the will of God and not make a grievance of what may not please you. Things may turn out differently from what they look apparently. Distress often leads men to faith in God.

D.: But we are worldly. There is the wife, there are the children, friends and relatives. We cannot ignore their existence and resign ourselves to Divine Will, without retaining some little of the personality in us.

M.: That means you have not surrendered as professed by you. You must only trust God.

Mr. Ramamurthi: Swamiji, I have read Brunton's book *A Search in Secret India*, and was much impressed by the last chapter, where he says that it is possible to be conscious without thinking. I know that one can think, remaining forgetful of the physical body. Can one think without the mind? Is it possible to gain that consciousness which is beyond thoughts?

M.: Yes. There is only one consciousness, which subsists in the waking, dream and sleep states. In sleep there is no 'I'. The 'I-thought' arises on waking and then the world appears. Where was this 'I' in sleep? Was it there or was it not? It must have been there also, but not in the way that you feel now. The present is only the 'I-thought', whereas the sleeping 'I' is the real 'I'. It subsists all through. It is consciousness. If it is known you will see that it is beyond thoughts.

D.: Can we think without the mind?

M.: Thoughts may be like any other activities, not disturbing to the Supreme consciousness.

D.: Can one read others' minds?

The Master as usual told him to find his Self before worrying about others.

"Where are others apart from one's own Self?" asked the Master.

Mr. Raghaviah: How shall we correlate the higher experience with the lower experience (meaning spiritual experience with mundane affairs)?

M.: There is only one experience. What are the worldly experiences but those built up on the false 'I'? Ask the most successful man of

the world if he knows his Self. He will say "No". What can anyone know without knowing the Self? All worldly knowledge is built upon such a flimsy foundation.

Mr. Ramamurthi: How to know the 'Real I' as distinct from the 'false I'.

M.: Is there anyone who is not aware of himself? Each one knows, but yet does not know, the Self. A strange paradox.

The Master added later, "If the enquiry is made whether mind exists, it will be found that mind does not exist. That is control of mind. Otherwise, if the mind is taken to exist and one seeks to control it, it amounts to mind controlling the mind, just like a thief turning out to be a policeman to catch the thief, *i.e.*, himself. Mind persists in that way alone, but eludes itself."

3rd April, 1935

Talk 44.

Mr. Ekanath Rao, an Engineer, asked Sri Bhagavan if solitude is necessary for vichara.

M.: There is solitude everywhere. The individual is solitary always. His business is to find it out within, and not seek it without.

D.: The work-a-day world is distracting.

M.: Do not allow yourself to be distracted. Enquire for whom there is distraction. It will not afflict you after a little practice.

D.: Even the attempt is impossible.

M.: Make it and it will be found not so difficult.

D.: But the answer does not come for the search inward.

M.: The enquirer is the answer and no other answer can come. What comes afresh cannot be true. What always is, is true.

6th April, 1935

Talk 45.

A visitor asked: The path of realisation is difficult. Worldly matters are easy of understanding, whereas this is not.

M.: Yes. The mind always seeks external knowledge, leaving aside its own inner knowledge.

D.: A stay of one day with Sri Bhagavan is good; a stay of two days is better; of three days, more so, and so on. If it is a continuous stay here, how shall we get on with our mundane work?

M.: Stay here or elsewhere must be understood to be the same and to have the same effect.

12th April, 1935

Talk 46.

After hearing the Malayalam version of *Upadesa Sara* chanted, Mr. Ramachandra Iyer of Nagercoil asked in a characteristically unsophisticated way about the mind, concentration and control. The Master said that the mind is only identity of the Self with the body. It is a false ego that is created; it creates false phenomena in its turn, and appears to move in them; all these are false. The Self is the only Reality. If the false identity vanishes the persistence of the Reality becomes apparent. It does not mean that Reality is not here and now. It is always there and eternally the same. It is also in everyone's experience. For everyone knows that he is. "Who is he?" Subjectively, "Who am I?" The false ego is associated with objects; this ego itself is its own object. Objectivity is the falsity. Subject is alone the Reality. Do not confound yourself with the object, namely the body. This gives rise to the false ego, consequently of the world and your movements therein with the resulting misery. Do not think yourself to be this, that or anything; to be so and so, or to be such and such. Only leave off the falsity. The Reality will reveal itself. The scriptures say that the Self is *nityasiddha*, ever present, and yet speak of the removal of *ajnana*. If Self is (*nitya*) always and (*siddha*) present, how can there be *ajnana*? For whom is the *ajnana*? These are contradictory. But such statements are for guiding the earnest seeker in the right way. He does not readily understand the only Truth if mentioned in plain words as in *natwam naham neme janadhipah* (not thou, nor I, nor these kings ...). Sri Krishna declared the Truth, but Arjuna could not grasp it. Later Krishna plainly says that people confound Him with the body, whereas in reality He was not born nor will He die. Still Arjuna requires the whole Gita for the Truth to be made clear to him.

Look, the Self is only Be-ing, not being this or that. It is simple Being. Be - and there is an end of the ignorance. Enquire for whom is the ignorance. The ego arises when you wake up from sleep. In deep sleep you do not say that you are sleeping and that you are going to wake up or that you have been sleeping so long. But still you are there. Only when you are awake you say that you have slept. Your wakefulness comprises sleep also in it. Realise your pure Be-ing. Let there be no confusion with the body. The body is the result of thoughts. The thoughts will play as usual, but you will not be affected. You were not concerned with the body when asleep; so you can always remain.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: How can anyone reconcile such activity with the wage-earning which is a necessity for worldly people?

M.: Actions form no bondage. Bondage is only the false notion. "I am the doer." Leave off such thoughts and let the body and senses play their role, unimpeded by your interference.

20th April, 1935

Talk 47.

A Malayalee visitor expressed his concern for the misery of the world and his opinion that 'Quest for Self' looked selfish in the midst of such suffering environments. His solution appeared to be selfless work.

M.: The sea is not aware of its wave. Similarly the Self is not aware of its ego.

Note: This makes clear what Sri Bhagavan means by quest for the source of ego.

Talk 48.

A visitor asked Sri Bhagavan, "You are Bhagavan. So you would know when I shall get *jnana*. Tell me when I shall be a *jnani*." Sri Bhagavan replied, "If I am Bhagavan there is no one besides the Self - therefore no *jnani* or *ajnani*. If otherwise I am as good as you are and know as much as yourself. Either way I cannot answer your question."

24th April, 1935

Talk 49.

Some men asked the Master questions which ultimately resolved themselves into one, that 'I' is not perceptible however much they might struggle.

The Master's reply was in the usual strain: "Who is it that says that 'I' is not perceptible? Is there an 'I' ignorant, and an 'I' elusive? Are there two 'I's in the same person? Ask yourself these questions. It is the mind which says that 'I' is not perceptible. Where is that mind from? Know the mind. You will find it a myth. King Janaka said, 'I have discovered the thief who had been ruining me so long. I will now deal with him summarily. Then I shall be happy.' Similarly it will be with others."

D.: How to know the 'I'?

M.: The 'I-I' is always there. There is no knowing it. It is not a new knowledge acquired. What is new and not here and now will be evanescent only. The 'I' is always there. There is obstruction to its knowledge and it is called ignorance. Remove the ignorance and knowledge shines forth. In fact this ignorance or even knowledge is not for Atman. They are only overgrowths to be cleared off. That is why Atman is said to be beyond knowledge and ignorance. It remains as it naturally is - that is all.

D.: There is no perceptible progress in spite of our attempts.

M.: Progress can be spoken of in things to be obtained afresh. Whereas here it is the removal of ignorance and not acquisition of knowledge. What kind of progress can be expected in the quest for the Self?

D.: How to remove the ignorance?

M.: While lying in bed in Tiruvannamalai you dream in your sleep that you find yourself in another town. The scene is real to you. Your body remains here on your bed in a room. Can a town enter your room, or could you have left this place and gone elsewhere, leaving the body here? Both are impossible. Therefore your being here and seeing another town are both unreal. They appear real to the mind. The 'I' of the dream soon vanishes, then another 'I' speaks of the dream. This 'I' was not in the dream. Both the 'I's are unreal. There

is the substratum of the mind which continues all along, giving rise to so many scenes. An 'I' rises forth with every thought and with its disappearance that 'I' disappears too. Many 'I's are born and die every moment. The subsisting mind is the real trouble. That is the thief according to Janaka. Find him out and you will be happy.

Talk 50.

Sri Bhagavan read out, from the *Prabuddha Bharata*, Kabir's saying that all know that the drop merges into the ocean but few know that the ocean merges into the drop. This is *para bhakti*, said he.

5th June, 1935

Talk 51.

A young Brahmin (25 years of age) came on a visit to the Master. At his sight he became hysterical and shouted *Sivoham*, *Aham Brahma Asmi*, "You are God", "You are *Para Brahmam*". "You are my father", "Father, save me" and so on. His hysterics waxing, he beat his chest violently alternately with both his hands, shouting *Sivoham, Sivoham*. Then again he shouted hysterically gnashing his teeth, "I will stamp out materialism", as if he was crushing materialism between his teeth. Then he asked. "Either give me power, either give me power - or - or - or - I will..." He began as if to throttle himself.

When gently removed by others he fell prostrate before Sri Bhagavan, saying, "I will take refuge at the feet of my Father. Father! You are Parthasarathi, I am Arjuna. We will stamp out materialism," and so on. He was finally taken away from the presence of Maharshi. He washed himself, took some light refreshment and quietly seated himself in the hall for some hours. He abstained from the midday meal. In the afternoon he had another fit when he shouted, "I will chop off the head of Krishna, if he should come here now. He advised me to give up my job, but does not protect my mother. Or let him chop off my head," and so on.

After some hours of quiet, Sri Bhagavan asked Mr. K. L. Sarma to read out a portion of his commentary on *Anubandha* (Appendix to 40 verses). The gist of it is that people, unable to help themselves, ask for divine powers to be utilised for human welfare. This is similar to the story of a

lame man who blustered, saying that he would overpower the enemy if only he were helped on to his legs. The intention is good but there is no sense of proportion. The young man on hearing it suddenly sprang to his feet, saluting Sri Bhagavan and saying "Father! Father! I was mistaken. Pardon me. Teach me. I shall abide by what you say," and so on. Then again in the evening he prostrated himself, saying, "I surrender."

9th June, 1935

Talk 52.

A man from Cocanada asked: "My mind remains clear for two or three days and turns dull for the next two or three days; and so it alternates. What is it due to?"

M.: It is quite natural; it is the play of brightness (*satva*), activity (*rajas*) and darkness (*tamas*) alternating. Do not regret the *tamas*; but when *satva* comes into play, hold on to it fast and make the best of it.

D.: What is the Heart?

M.: It is the seat (if such could be said of it) of the Self.

D.: Is it the physical heart?

M.: No. It is the seat wherefrom 'I-I' arises.

D.: What becomes of the *jiva* after death?

M.: The question is not appropriate for a *jiva* now living. A disembodied *jiva* may ask me, if convenient. In the meantime let the embodied *jiva* solve its present problem and find who he is. There will be an end of such doubts.

D.: What is *dhyana*?

M.: The word *dhyana* usually signifies meditation on some object, whereas *nididhyasana* is used for enquiry into the Self. The triads persist until the Self is realised. *Dhyana* and *nididhyasana* are the same so far as the aspirant is concerned, because they involve trinity and are synonymous with *bhakti*.

D.: How should *dhyana* be practised?

M.: Dhyana serves to concentrate the mind. The predominant idea keeps off all others. *Dhyana* varies according to the individual. It may be on an aspect of God, on a *mantra*, or on the Self, etc.

15th June, 1935

Talk 53.

A young man, Mr. Knowles, came for *darsan*. He had read Paul Brunton's two books. He asked: "The Buddhists say that 'I' is unreal, whereas Paul Brunton in the *Secret Path* tells us to get over the 'I-thought' and reach the state of 'I'. Which is true?"

M.: There are supposed to be two 'I's; the one is lower and unreal, of which all are aware; and the other, the higher and the real, which is to be realised.

You are not aware of yourself while asleep, you are aware in wakefulness; waking, you say that you were asleep; you did not know it in the deep sleep state. So then, the idea of diversity has arisen along with the body-consciousness; this body-consciousness arose at some particular moment; it has origin and end. What originates must be something. What is that something? It is the 'I'-consciousness. Who am I? Whence am I? On finding the source, you realise the state of Absolute Consciousness.

D.: Who is this 'I'? It seems to be only a continuum of sense-impression. The Buddhist idea seems to be so too.

M.: The world is not external. The impressions cannot have an outer origin. Because the world can be cognised only by consciousness. The world does not say that it exists. It is your impression. Even so this impression is not consistent and not unbroken. In deep sleep the world is not cognised; and so it exists not for a sleeping man. Therefore the world is the sequence of the ego. Find out the ego. The finding of its source is the final goal.

D.: I believe that we should not inflict suffering on other lives. Should we then endure the mosquito bite and submit to it also?

M.: You do not like to suffer yourself. How can you inflict suffering on others? Just keep off mosquitoes since you suffer by their stings.

D.: Is it right that we kill other lives, *e.g.*, mosquitoes, bugs?

M.: Everyone is a suicide. The eternal, blissful, and natural state has been smothered by this life of ignorance. In this way the present life is due to the killing of the eternal, pristine Being. Is it not a case of suicide? So then, everyone is a suicide. Why worry about murders and killing?

In the course of a later talk the visitor said: “The world sends impressions and I awake!”

M.: Can the world exist without someone to perceive it? Which is prior? The Being-consciousness or the rising-consciousness? The Being-consciousness is always there, eternal and pure. The rising-consciousness rises forth and disappears. It is transient.

D.: Does not the world exist for others even when I am asleep?

M.: Such a world mocks at you also for knowing it without knowing yourself. The world is the result of your mind. Know your mind. Then see the world. You will realise that it is not different from the Self.

D.: Is not Maharshi aware of himself and his surroundings, as clearly as I am?

M.: To whom is the doubt? The doubts are not for the realised. They are only for the ignorant.

16th June, 1935

Talk 54.

An Andhra Pandit - an elderly gentleman - had some doubts regarding Kavyakantha’s exposition of Advaita. He has found it in books that Brahman is free from *sajatiya, vijatiya* and *swagata bheda*. Such conditions are satisfied in *vivarta vada* but not in *parinama vada*. In the latter, *swagata bheda* is bound to be. The Master pointed out that Dakshinamurti did not teach anything of the kind. He did not say that Brahman is related to *Sakti* or not related. All that was, was only silence; and the doubts of the *sishyas* (disciples) were cleared. The significance is that there is nothing to be learnt, discussed and concluded. Everyone knows ‘I am.’ There is the confusion that the ‘I’ is the body. Because the ‘I’ arises from the Absolute and gives rise to *buddhi* (Intellect). In *buddhi* the ‘I’ looks the size and shape of the body, *na medhaya* means that Brahman cannot be apprehended by *buddhi*.

Brahman → *aham* (‘I-I’) → *buddhi* (intellect).

How can such *buddhi* crossing over *aham* discover Brahman? It is impossible. Just get over the false conception of the ‘I’ being the

body. Discover to whom the thoughts arise. If the present 'I'-ness vanishes, the discovery is complete. What remains over is the pure Self. Compare deep sleep and wakefulness. Diversity and body are found only in the latter. In the former the Self remains without the perception of body or of the world. Happiness reigns there.

The *Sruti vakya, 'Aham Brahmasmi'*, relates to the state and not the mode of mind. One cannot become Brahman by continuing to repeat the *mantra*. It means that Brahman is not elsewhere. It is your Self. Find that Self; Brahman is found. Do not attempt to reach Brahman as if it were in some far off place.

The Pandit remarked that thoughts are so persistent that the *aham* cannot be reached.

The Master said: The *Brahma akara vritti* helps to turn the mind away from other thoughts. Either some such practice is necessary or association with sadhus should be made. The sadhu has already overcome the mind and remains in Peace. His proximity helps to bring about such condition in others. Otherwise there is no meaning in seeking a sadhu's company.

Deho aham (I am the body) is limitation and is the root of all mean and selfish actions and desires.

Brahma aham (I am Brahman) is passing beyond limitation and signifies sympathy, charity, love etc., which are divine and virtuous.

D.: How does a *grihasta* (householder) fare in the scheme of *moksha* (liberation)?

M.: Why do you think you are a *grihasta*? If you go out as a *sanyasi*, a similar thought (that you are a *sanyasi*) will haunt you. Whether you continue in the household, or renounce it and go to the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thoughts. It creates the body and the world and makes you think you are a *grihasta*. If you renounce the world, it will only substitute the thought *sanyasi* for *grihasta* and the environments of the forest for those of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there. They even increase in new surroundings. There is no help in the change of environment. The obstacle is the mind. It must be got over whether at home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in

the home? Therefore why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, in whatever environment you may be.

The environment never abandons you, according to your desire. Look at me. I left home. Look at yourselves. You have come here leaving the home environment. What do you find here? Is this different from what you left? Even if one is immersed in *nirvikalpa samadhi* for years together, when he emerges from it he will find himself in the environment which he is bound to have. That is the reason for the Acharya emphasising *sahaja samadhi* in preference to *nirvikalpa samadhi* in his excellent work *Viveka Chudamani*.

One should be in spontaneous *samadhi* - that is, in one's pristine state - in the midst of every environment.

Later on Sri Bhagavan said: "Control of breath may be internal or external."

The *antah pranayama* (the internal breath-regulation) is as follows:-

Naham chinta (I-am-not-the-body idea) is *rechaka* (exhalation).

Koham (who am I?) is *puraka* (inhalation).

Soham (I am He) is *kumbhaka* (retention of breath).

Doing thus, the breath becomes automatically controlled.

Bahih pranayama (external control) is for one not endowed with strength to control the mind. There is no way so sure as that; or a *sadhu's* company. The external practice must be resorted to by a wise man if he does not enjoy a *sadhu's* company. If in a *sadhu's* company the *sadhu* provides the needed strength, though unseen by others, *Pranayama* need not be exactly as described in *hatha* Yoga. If engaged in *japa, dhyana, bhakti,* etc., just a little control of breath will suffice to control the mind. The mind is the rider and the breath the horse. *Pranayama* is a check on the horse. By that check the rider is checked.

Pranayama may be done just a little. To watch the breath is one way of doing it. The mind abstracted from other activities is engaged in watching the breath. That controls the breath; and in its turn the mind is controlled.

If unable to do so, *rechaka* and *puraka* need not be practised. Breath may be retained a short while in *japa*, *dhyana*, etc. Then, too, good results will follow.

18th June, 1935

Talk 55.

D.: Can *advaita* be realised by *japa* of holy names; say Rama, Krishna, etc.?

M.: Yes.

D.: Is it not a means of an inferior order?

M.: Have you been told to make *japa* or to discuss its order in the scheme of things?

Silence.

22nd June, 1935

Talk 56.

A youth of twenty asked how to realise the Self. He sat down in silence and waited more than an hour and then was about to leave. While doing so, he asked:

D.: How to realise Self?

M.: Whose Self? Find out.

D.: Who am I?

M.: Find it yourself.

D.: I do not know.

M.: Think. Who is it that says "I do not know"? What is not known? In that statement, who is the 'I'?

D.: Somebody in me.

M.: Who is the somebody? In whom?

D.: Maybe some power.

M.: Find it.

D.: How to realise Brahman?

M.: Without knowing the Self why do you seek to know Brahman?

D.: The *sastras* say Brahman pervades all and me too.

M.: Find the 'I' in me and then there will be time to think of Brahman.

D.: Why was I born?

M.: Who was born? The answer is the same for all of your questions.

D.: Who am I then?

M.: (Smiling) Have you come to examine me and ask me? You must say who you are.

D.: In deep sleep the soul leaves the body and remains elsewhere. When it re-enters I awake. Is it so?

M.: What is it that leaves the body?

D.: The power, perhaps.

M.: Find out the power.

D.: The body is composed of five elements. What are the elements?

M.: Without knowing the Self how do you aim at knowing the elements?

The young man sat awhile and left with permission. The Master remarked later: "All right. It will work."

23rd June, 1935

Talk 57.

Sri Bhagavan said that *sushumna* is the name mostly mentioned in scriptures. Other names also occur; *e.g., para, atma, amrita*. It is also stated that *sushumna* becomes *leena* (merged in *para*). So it may be said that *para* is the terminology of *jnana*, whereas *sushumna* is that of *Yoga*.

24th June, 1935

A DOUBT IN 'SRI RAMANA GITA' ANSWERED

Chapter XIV, Stanza 10 reads: "With yet further progress, invisibility also may result. Such an one, being pure consciousness only, flourishes as a *siddha*."

Chapter XVIII, Last Stanza reads: "The glory of the *siddhis* is past imagination, they are equal to Siva, yea Siva himself, in being able to grant boons."

The meaning is that, with Self-Realization, real and incessant *tapas* results. With the maturing of such *tapas* some *jnanis* can make their bodies intangible and invisible. They are known as *siddhas*.

Later, “the greatness of the *siddhas* is incomprehensible. They are equal to Siva and can even grant boons.” So said Sri Bhagavan.

There is an Upanishad *mantra*, *atmajnam hyarchayet bhutikamah* (one desirous of liberation or wealth must serve a Self-realised Sage). Here is no mention of *siddha* for granting boons. The *jnani* can do so. The *mantras* again, *swe mahimni pratishtitah* (abiding in his own grandeur), *anantam Brahma* (Brahman is infinite), will seem confounding when read with the slokas cited above. *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* (All this is Brahman); *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati* (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Itself), show that a *jnani* is *sarvajna* (all-knower). What then is the distinction between the *jnani* and the *siddha*, and the ability of the latter to grant boons, implying the absence of it in the former?

This was the doubt. The master explained: “The Gita questions were asked in a certain spirit. The answers were according to it. People look to the body only and they want *siddhis* also. With Self-Realisation no powers can extend even into it, and how can they extend beyond? People anxious for *siddhis* are not content with their idea of *jnana* and so want *siddhis* associated with it. They are likely to neglect the supreme happiness of *jnana* and aspire for *siddhis*. For this they are going through the by-lanes instead of the royal path and so will likely lose their way. In order to guide them aright and keep them on the royal road alone the *siddhis* are said to accompany *jnana*. In fact *jnana* comprises all, and a *jnani* will not waste even a thought on them. Let the people get *jnana* and then seek *siddhis* if they so desire.

I have said: *sarira samsrayah siddhayah* (the *siddhis* relate to the body), because their outlook is concerning the body. A *jnani* and *siddha* are not different. In *varan datum* (to bestow boons) the boons include *atmalabha* (the gain of Self) also. The *siddhis* are not merely of an inferior order but of the highest order.

The *sastras* are meant to suit varying conditions. Their spirit remains the same. In *Halasya Mahima* there is a chapter on the eightfold

siddhis. There Siva says that His *bhakta* never wastes a thought on them. Again Siva says that He never grants boons. The desires of the devotees are fulfilled according to their *prarabdha* only. When *Iswara* Himself says so, what of others? In order to display *siddhis* there must be others to recognise them. That means there is no *jnana* in the one who displays them. Therefore *siddhis* are not worthy of any thought. *Jnana* alone is to be aimed at and gained.

Sri Ramana Gita Chapter XVII, Verse 4, Translation in Tamil is inaccurate.

Sri Bhagavan pointed out the inaccuracy and corrected it. Vaidharbha's question was: "In practice, the thoughts are found to manifest and subside alternately. Is this *jnana*?" Sri Bhagavan explained the doubt as follows:

Some people think that there are different stages in *jnana*. The Self is *nitya aparoksha*, *i.e.*, ever-realised, knowingly or unknowingly. *Sravana*, they argue, should therefore be *aparoksha jnana* (directly experienced) and not *paroksha jnana* (indirect knowledge). But *jnana* should result in *duhkha nivriti* (loss of misery) whereas *sravana* alone does not bring it about. Therefore they say, though *aparoksha*, it is not unshaken; the rising of *vasanas* is the cause of its being weak (not unchanging); when the *vasanas* are removed, *jnana* becomes unshaken and bears fruit.

Others say *sravana* is only *paroksha jnana*. By *manana* (reflection) it becomes *aparoksha* spasmodically. The obstruction to its continuity is the *vasanas:* they rise up with reinforced vigour after *manana*. They must be held in check. Such vigilance consists in remembering = "I am not the body" and adhering to the *aparoksha anubhava* (direct experience) which has been had in course of *manana* (reflection). Such practice is called *nididhyasana* and eradicates the *vasanas*. Then dawns the *sahaja* state. That is *jnana*, sure.

The *aparoksha* in *manana* cannot effect *dukha nivritti* (loss of misery) and cannot amount to *moksha*, *i.e.*, release from bondage because the *vasanas* periodically overpower the *jnana*. Hence it is *adridha* (weak) and becomes firm after the *vasanas* have been eradicated by *nididhyasana* (one-pointedness).

SRI RAMANA GITA AGAIN

Mr. T. K. S. Iyer, a devotee, was speaking of the *chakras* Sri Bhagavan said: Atman (the Self) alone is to be realised. Its realisation holds all else in its compass. *Sakti*, Ganapati; *siddhis*, etc., are included in it. Those who speak of these have not realised the Atman. Atman is in the heart and *is* the Heart itself. The manifestation is in the brain. The passage from the heart to the brain might be considered to be through *sushumna* or a nerve with any other name. The Upanishads say *pare leena* - meaning that *sushumna* or such *nadis* are all comprised in *para*, *i.e.*, the *atma nadi*. The yogis say that the current rising up to *sahasrara* (brain) ends there. That experience is not complete. For *jnana*, they must come to the Heart. *Hridaya* (Heart) is the alpha and omega.

4th July, 1935

SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA

Talk 58.

Mr. Ranganathan, I. C. S: In *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* there is a passage: One's own *dharma* is the best; an alien *dharma* is full of risks. What is the significance of one's own *dharma*?

M.: It is usually interpreted to mean the duties of the orders and of the different castes. The physical environment must also be taken into consideration.

D.: If *varnasrama dharma* be meant, such *dharma* prevails only in India. On the other hand the *Gita* should be universally applicable.

M.: There is *varnasrama* in some form or other in every land. The significance is that one should hold on to the single Atman and not swerve therefrom. That is the whole gist of it.

sva = one's own, *i.e.*, of the Self, of the Atman.

para = the other's, *i.e.*, of the non-self, of the *anatma*.

Atma Dharma is inherence in the Self. There will be no distraction and no fear. Troubles arise only when there is a second to oneself. If the Atman be realised to be only unitary, there is no second and therefore no cause for fear. The man, as he is now, confounds the

anatma (non-Self) *dharma* with *atma* (the Self) *dharma* and suffers. Let him know the Self and abide in it; there is an end of fear, and there are no doubts.

Even if interpreted as *varnasrama dharma* the significance is only this much. Such *dharma* bears fruit only when done selflessly. That is, one must realise that he is not the doer, but that he is only a tool of some Higher Power. Let the Higher Power do what is inevitable and let me act only according to its dictates. The actions are not mine. Therefore the result of the actions cannot be mine. If one thinks and acts so, where is the trouble? Be it *varnasrama dharma* or *loukika dharma* (worldly activities), it is immaterial. Finally, it amounts to this:

sva = *atmanah* (of the Self)

para = *anaatmanah* (of the non-self)

Such doubts are natural. The orthodox interpretation cannot be reconciled with the life of a modern man obliged to work for his livelihood in different capacities.

A man from Pondy interposed: *Sarva dharmaan parityajya maamekam saranam vraja* (leaving all duties surrender to me only).

Sri Bhagavan: (All) *Sarva* is only *anaatmanah* (of the non-self); the emphasis is on *ekam* (only). To the man who has strong hold of the *eka* (one) where are the *dharmas*? It means, "Be sunk in the Self."

D.: The Gita was taught for action.

M.: What does the Gita say? Arjuna refused to fight.

Krishna said, "So long as you refuse to fight, you have the sense of doership. Who are you to refrain or to act? Give up the notion of doership. Until that sense disappears you are bound to act. You are being manipulated by a Higher Power. You are admitting it by your own refusal to submit to it. Instead recognise the Power and submit as a tool. (Or to put it differently), if you refuse you will be forcibly drawn into it. Instead of being an unwilling worker, be a willing one.

"Rather, be fixed in the Self and act according to nature without the thought of doership. Then the results of action will not affect you. That is manliness and heroism."

Thus, 'inherence in the Self' is the sum and substance of *Gita* teaching. Finally, the Master Himself added, "If a man be established in the Self these doubts would not arise. They arise only until he is established there."

D.: Then of what use is such reply to the enquirer?

M.: The words still have force and will surely operate in due course.

Talk 59.

A moulvi asked: How does sleep overtake one?

M.: If the enquirer knows who is awake in the wakeful condition he will also know how sleep comes on. The enquiry arises only to the waking man and not to the sleeper. It must be easier to know the waking Self than the sleeping Self.

D.: I know how I awoke. But I do not know how sleep comes on. I am aware of my wakeful state. For instance if anyone takes away my stick I prevent his doing so, whereas I cannot do so in sleep or in dream. The proof of wakefulness is evident. But what is the proof of sleep?

M.: Your ignorance is the evidence of sleep: your awareness is that of wakefulness.

D.: My wakefulness is known by the opening of my eye. But how does sleep overtake me?

M.: In the same way as sleep overtakes you, wakefulness also overtakes you.

D.: But I do not perceive how sleep comes on in the same way as I know my wakefulness.

M.: Never mind.

D.: Please describe what is sleep, without illustrations. Sleep by itself should be known. I want a real picture of sleep.

M.: Such picture is sleep itself.

D.: Is it better to reach salvation, being married, or being a hermit?

M.: Whatever you think better.

D.: Visvamitra had no fall when in the married state, whereas he had a fall in his hermit life. Does it not apply to others also?

M.: Visvamitra was as pure in the hermit life as when he was married. There was no difference. He was as contaminated when married as when he was a hermit.

D.: Was he a *rishi*?

M.: When contaminated he was not a *rishi*.

D.: Can he become a *rishi* even afterwards?

M.: Yes. By proper *bhakti* he could become a good *rishi*. Repentance and prayer will set him right.

D.: With all your penance for so many years what have you got?

M.: I have got what need be got. I see what need be seen.

D.: Can all see the same?

M.: I see only just what all do. It is immanent in all.

D.: Is this the way for seeing It?

M.: Method may be anything. From whatever directions the pilgrims may foregather, they must enter the Kaaba only by one route (passage) or all gather only to enter the Kaaba.

D.: Please tell me two *upadesas* on the way to salvation as known by you.

M.: What *upadesa* do I know? Everything is *upadesa*. Worship of God is the only *upadesa*.

5th July, 1935

ON MOUNA (SILENCE)

Talk 60.

Sri Bhagavan: The silence of solitude is forced. Restrained speech in society amounts to silence. For the man then controls his speech. The speaker must come forth before he speaks. If engaged otherwise speech is restrained. Introverted mind is otherwise active and is not anxious to speak.

Mouna as a disciplinary measure is meant for limiting the mental activities due to speech. If the mind is otherwise controlled disciplinary *mouna* is unnecessary. For *mouna* becomes natural.

Vidyaranya has said that twelve years' forced *mouna* brings about

absolute *mouna* - that is, makes one unable to speak. It is more like a mute animal than otherwise. That is not *mouna*.

Mouna is constant speech. Inactivity is constant activity.

6th July, 1935

Talk 61.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: How is *dhyana* practised - with eyes open or closed?

M.: It may be done either way. The point is that the mind must be introverted and kept active in its pursuit. Sometimes it happens that when the eyes are closed the latent thoughts rush forth with great vigour. It may also be difficult to introvert the mind with the eyes open. It requires strength of mind to do so. The mind is contaminated when it takes in objects. Otherwise, it is pure. The main factor in *dhyana* is to keep the mind active in its own pursuit without taking in external impressions or thinking of other matters.

Talk 62.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao: What is *sphurana* (a kind of indescribable but palpable sensation in the heart centre)?

M.: Sphurana is felt on several occasions, such as in fear, excitement, etc. Although it is always and all over, yet it is felt at a particular centre and on particular occasions. It is also associated with antecedent causes and confounded with the body. Whereas, it is all alone and pure; it is the Self. If the mind be fixed on the *sphurana* and one senses it continuously and automatically it is realisation.

Again *sphurana* is the foretaste of Realisation. It is pure. The subject and object proceed from it. If the man mistakes himself for the subject, objects must necessarily appear different from him. They are periodically withdrawn and projected, creating the world and the subject's enjoyment of the same. If, on the other hand, the man feels himself to be the screen on which the subject and object are projected there can be no confusion, and he can remain watching their appearance and disappearance without any perturbation to the Self.

Talk 63.

A high officer asked: If juniors are promoted over oneself the mind is perturbed. Will the enquiry, 'Who am I?' help the man to soothe the mind under such circumstances?

M.: Yes. Quite so. The enquiry 'Who am I?' turns the mind inward and makes it calm.

D.: I have faith in *murti dhyana* (worship of form). Will it not help me to gain *jnana*?

M.: Surely it will. *Upasana* helps concentration of mind. Then the mind is free from other thoughts and is full of the meditated form. The mind becomes it - and thus quite pure. Then think who is the worshipper. The answer is 'I', *i.e.*, the Self. So the Self is gained ultimately.

The present difficulty is that the man thinks that he is the doer. But it is a mistake. It is the Higher Power which does everything and the man is only a tool. If he accepts that position he is free from troubles; otherwise he courts them. Take for instance, the figure in a *gopuram* (temple tower), where it is made to appear to bear the burden of the tower on its shoulders. Its posture and look are a picture of great strain while bearing the very heavy burden of the tower. But think. The tower is built on the earth and it rests on its foundations. The figure (like Atlas bearing the earth) is a part of the tower, but is made to look as if it bore the tower. Is it not funny? So is the man who takes on himself the sense of doing.

Then the Malayalam version of *Ulladu Narpadu* was read out by a devotee for the benefit of the visitor.

After hearing it, he asked: What about the reference to duality in practice and unity at the end?

M.: Some people think that one must begin practice with dualistic idea. It refers to them. They say that there is God; the man must worship and meditate; ultimately the *jiva* merges into God. Others say that the Supreme Being and the *jiva* are always apart and never merge into each other. Howsoever it may be at the end, let us not trouble ourselves about it now. All are agreed that the *jiva* IS. Let the man find out the *jiva, i.e.*, his Self. Then there will be time to

find out if the Self should merge in the Supreme, is a part thereof, or remains different from it. Let us not forestall the conclusion. Keep an open mind, dive within and find out the Self. The truth will itself dawn upon you. Why should you determine beforehand if the finality is unity absolute or qualified, or duality? There is no meaning in it. The ascertainment is now made by logic and by intellect. The intellect derives light from the Self (the Higher Power). How can the reflected and partial light of the intellect envisage the whole and the original Light? The intellect cannot reach the Self and how can it ascertain its nature?

Such is the significance of the reference.

D.: One of the stanzas says that the scriptures so scrupulously studied in the earlier stages are ultimately of no use. At what stage do they become useless?

M.: When their essence is realised. The scriptures are useful to indicate the existence of the Higher Power (the Self) and the way to gain it. Their essence is that much only. When that is assimilated the rest is useless. But they are voluminous, adapted to the development of the seeker. As one rising up in the scale finds the regions one has passed to be only steps to the higher stage, and so on, the steps ascended become *purvapaksha* successively until the goal is gained. When the goal is reached it remains alone, and all the rest becomes useless. That is how the *sastras* become useless. We read so much. Do we remember all that we read? But have we forgotten the essentials? The essential soaks in the mind and the rest is forgotten. So it is with the *sastras*.

The fact is that the man considers himself limited and there arises the trouble. The idea is wrong. He can see it for himself. In sleep there was no world, no ego (no limited self), and no trouble. Something wakes up from that happy state and says 'I'. To that ego the world appears. Being a speck in the world he wants more and gets into trouble.

How happy he was before the rising of the ego! Only the rise of the ego is the cause of the present trouble. Let him trace the ego to its source and he will reach that undifferentiated happy state which is sleepless sleep. The Self remains ever the same, here and now. There is nothing more to be gained. Because the limitations have wrongly

been assumed there is the need to transcend them. It is like the ten ignorant fools who forded a stream and on reaching the other shore counted themselves to be nine only. They grew anxious and grieved over the loss of the unknown tenth man. A wayfarer, on ascertaining the cause of their grief, counted them all and found them to be ten. But each one of them had counted the others leaving himself out. The wayfarer gave each in succession a blow telling them to count the blows. They counted ten and were satisfied. The moral is that the tenth man was not got anew. He was all along there, but ignorance caused grief to all of them.

Again, a woman wore a necklace round her neck but forgot it. She began to search for it and made enquiries. A friend of hers, finding out what she was looking for, pointed out the necklace round the seeker's neck. She felt it with her hands and was happy. Did she get the necklace anew? Here again ignorance caused grief and knowledge happiness.

Similarly also with the man and the Self. There is nothing to be gained anew. Ignorance of the Self is the cause of the present misery; knowledge of the Self brings about happiness.

Moreover, if anything is to be got anew it implies its previous absence. What remained once absent might vanish again. So there would be no permanency in salvation. Salvation is permanent because the Self is here and now and eternal.

Thus the man's efforts are directed towards the removal of ignorance. Wisdom seems to dawn, though it is natural and ever present.

The visitor, while taking leave, saluted the master, and said, "It is said that the victim in the tiger's mouth is gone for ever."

The reference is to a passage in Who am I? where it is stated that a disciple can never revert to the world after he has once fallen into the field of the Guru's gracious look as surely as the prey in the tiger's jaws cannot escape.

Talk 64.

News of someone's death was brought to Sri Bhagavan. He said, "Good. The dead are indeed happy. They have got rid of the troublesome overgrowth - the body. The dead man does not grieve.

The survivors grieve for the man who is dead. Do men fear sleep? On the contrary sleep is courted and on waking up every man says that he slept happily. One prepares the bed for sound sleep. Sleep is temporary death. Death is longer sleep. If the man dies while yet alive he need not grieve over others' death. One's existence is evident with or without the body, as in waking, dream and sleep. Then why should one desire continuance of the bodily shackles? Let the man find out his undying Self and die and be immortal and happy."

13th July, 1935

Talk 65.

A visitor: Is the *jagat* (world) perceived even after Self-Realization?

M.: From whom is this question? Is it from a *jnani* or from an *ajnani*?

D.: From an *ajnani*.

M.: Realise to whom the question arises. It can be answered if it arises after knowing the doubter. Can the *jagat* or the body say that it is? Or does the seer say that the *jagat* or the body is? The seer must be there to see the objects. Find out the seer first. Why worry yourself now with what will be in the hereafter?

Sri Bhagavan continued: What does it matter if the *jagat* is perceived or not perceived? Have you lost anything by your perception of *jagat* now? Or do you gain anything where there is no such perception in your deep sleep? It is immaterial whether the world is perceived or not perceived.

The *ajnani* sees the *jnani* active and is confounded. The *jagat* is perceived by both; but their outlooks differ. Take the instance of the cinema. There are pictures moving on the screen. Go and hold them. What do you hold? It is only the screen. Let the pictures disappear. What remains over? The screen again. So also here. Even when the world appears, see to whom it appears. Hold the substratum of the 'I'. After the substratum is held what does it matter if the world appears or disappears?

The *ajnani* takes the world to be real; whereas the *jnani* sees it only as the manifestation of the Self. It is immaterial if the Self manifests itself or ceases to do so.

15th July, 1935

Talk 66.

A letter was received containing some learned questions pertaining to memory, sleep and death. It looked, at first sight, that they were cogent yet baffling to answer. But when the Master was approached on the subject he disentangled the skein very nicely, pointing out that all such confusion was due to the non-differentiation of the real 'I' from the false 'I'. The attributes and modes pertain to the latter and not to the former. One's efforts are directed only to remove one's ignorance. Afterwards they cease, and the real Self is found to be always there. No effort is needed to remain as the Self.

21st July, 1935

Talk 67.

A visitor, Mr. K. S. N. Iyer of the South Indian Railway, said, "There is a trifling halting-place in my meditation. When I ask myself, 'Who am I?' my reasoning proceeds as follows; I see my hand. Who sees it? My eye. How to see the eye? In a mirror. Similarly to see me, there must be a mirror. 'Which is to supply the place of the mirror in me?' is my question."

M.: Then why do you enquire, "Who am I?" Why do you say you are troubled and so on? You could as well remain quiet. Why do you rise out of your composure?

D.: Enquiring thus helps me to concentrate. Is concentration the only benefit?

M.: What more do you want? Concentration is the thing. What makes you come out of your quiet?

D.: Because I am drawn out.

M.: Enquiry of "Who am I?" means finding the source of 'I'. When that is found, that which you seek is accomplished.

(The gist of Sri Bhagavan's words seems to be that one should make a concerted effort and not give it up baffled, with a defeatist mentality.)

Talk 68.

Dr. Radhakamal Mukerjee, a well-known Professor, fair man of middle age, with a peaceful look, practising yoga or meditation, has had some occult experiences and desires the mystery to be unravelled by the Master. He has written a book and had it published by Messrs. Longmans Green & Co., London. He finds Self-Realisation hard to attain and requires the Master's help. His question: "The *upanishadic* method of meditation has now disappeared. There was a great sage in Bengal who instructed me in it. After long years of discipline and practice I am having some mystic experiences. I feel sometimes that *Bhuma* (Supreme Consciousness) is infinitude and that I am finite consciousness. Is that correct?"

M.: Bhuma (Perfection) alone is. It is Infinite. There arises from it this finite consciousness taking on an *upadhi* (limiting adjunct). This is *abhasa* or reflection. Merge this individual consciousness into the Supreme One. That is what should be done.

D.: Bhuma is an attribute of Supreme Consciousness.

M.: Bhuma is the Supreme - *yatra naanyat pasyati yatra naanyat srunoti sa bhuma* (where one does not see any other, hears nothing, it is Perfection). It is indefinable and indescribable. It is as it is.

D.: There is a vastness experienced. Probably it is just below *Bhuma* but close to it. Am I right?

M.: Bhuma alone is. Nothing else. It is the mind, which says all this.

D.: Transcending the mind I feel the vastness.

M.: Yes, Yes....

The professor turned to the lady seated just a little further away from him and interpreted in Hindi to her.

She: What is the difference between meditation and distraction?

M.: No difference. When there are thoughts, it is distraction: when there are no thoughts, it is meditation. However, meditation is only practice (as distinguished from the real state of Peace.)

She: How to practice meditation?

M.: Keep off thoughts.

She: How to reconcile work with meditation?

M.: Who is the worker? Let him who works ask the question. You are always the Self. You are not the mind. It is the mind which raises these questions. Work proceeds, always in the presence of the Self only. Work is no hindrance to realisation. It is the mistaken identity of the worker that troubles one. Get rid of the false identity.

The Professor: Is not the state of non-consciousness close to Infinite Consciousness?

M.: Consciousness alone remains and nothing more.

D.: Sri Bhagavan's silence is itself a powerful force. It brings about a certain peace of mind in us.

M.: Silence is never-ending speech. Vocal speech obstructs the other speech of silence. In silence one is in intimate contact with the surroundings. The silence of Dakshinamurti removed the doubts of the four sages. *Mouna vyakhya prakatita tatvam* (Truth expounded by silence.) Silence is said to be exposition. Silence is so potent.

For vocal speech, organs of speech are necessary and they precede speech. But the other speech lies even beyond thought. It is in short transcendent speech or unspoken words, *para vak*.

D.: Is there knowledge in Realisation?

M.: Absence of knowledge is sleep. There is knowledge in Realisation. But this knowledge differs from the ordinary one of the relation of subject and object. It is absolute knowledge. Knowledge has two meanings:

(1) *vachyartha* = *vritti* = Literal meaning.

(2) *lakshyartha* = *Jnana* = *Self* = *Swarupa* = Secondary significance.

D.: With *vritti* one sees knowledge.

M.: Quite so, he also confounds *vritti* with knowledge. *Vritti* is a mode of mind. You are not the mind. You are beyond it.

The Lady: There is sometimes an irresistible desire to remain in *Brahma-akara-vritti*.

M.: It is good. It must be cultivated until it becomes *sahaja* (natural). Then it culminates as *swarupa*, one's own self.

Later Sri Bhagavan explained: *Vritti* is often mistaken for consciousness. It is only a phenomenon and operates in the region

of *abhasa* (reflected consciousness). The knowledge lies beyond relative knowledge and ignorance. It is not in the shape of *vritti*. There are no subject and object in it.

Vritti belongs to the *rajasic* (active) mind. The *satvic* mind (mind is repose) is free from it. The *satvic* is the witness of the *rajasic*. It is no doubt true consciousness. Still it is called *satvic* mind because the knowledge of being witness is the function of *abhasa* (reflected consciousness) only. Mind is the *abhasa*. Such knowledge implies mind. But the mind is by itself inoperative. Therefore it is called *satvic* mind.

Such is the *jivanmukta's* state. It is also said that his mind is dead. Is it not a paradox that a *jivanmukta* has a mind and that it is dead? This has to be conceded in argument with ignorant folk.

It is also said that Brahman is only the *jivanmukta's* mind. How can one speak of him as *Brahmavid* (knower of Brahman). Brahman can never be an object to be known. This is, however, in accordance with common parlance.

Satvic mind is surmised of the *jivanmukta* and of *Iswara*. "Otherwise," they argue, "how does the *jivanmukta* live and act?" The *satvic* mind has to be admitted as a concession to argument.

The *satvic* mind is in fact the Absolute consciousness. The object to be witnessed and the witness finally merge together and Absolute consciousness alone reigns supreme. It is not a state of *sunya* (blank) or ignorance. It is the *swarupa* (Real Self). Some say that mind arises from consciousness followed by reflection (*abhasa*); others say that the *abhasa* (reflection) arises first followed by the mind. In fact both are simultaneous.

The Professor asked Sri Bhagavan to extend His Grace to him although he would soon be a thousand miles off. Sri Bhagavan said that time and space are only concepts of mind. But *swarupa* (the Real Self) lies beyond mind, time and space. Distance does not count in the Self.

The lady with him was most reluctant to leave the Master and return home. The Master said, "Think that you are always in my presence. That will make you feel right." They left after dusk.

Talk 69.

There were reports of the above said Professor's University lectures in the *Hindu*. The lecturer had emphasised the necessity for birth control and discussed the various possibilities of making the man feel his responsibilities so that birth control might be automatic. The Master, on hearing it, casually remarked. "Let them find out the method of dying." [Here death refers to that of the ego (*ahankar*).]

24th July, 1935

Talk 70.

Sri Raju Sastrigal asked Sri Bhagavan about *nada*, *bindu* and *kala*.

M.: They are in Vedanta terminology *prana*, *mana*, *buddhi* (the life-current, mind and intellect). In the Tantras *nada* is said to be subtle sound with *tejas* - light - in it. This light is said to be the body of Siva. When it develops and sound is submerged, it becomes *bindu*. To be full of light (*tejomaya*) is the aim. *Kala* is a part of the *bindu*.

Talk 71.

CHRONOLOGICAL SEQUENCE OF THE MASTER'S STAY IN DIFFERENT PLACES AT TIRUVANNAMALAI

1896. Arrived at Tiruvannamalai and stayed in the temple premises, beneath the tree, in the interior of the underground cellar, *Pathala Lingam*, sometimes in the *gopurams*, etc.

1897 (early), removed to Gurumurtam. Stayed in the shrine and in the adjoining mango grove (18 months).

1898 (September) in Pavalakunru.

1899 (February) on the hill in caves, the mango tree cave and Virupaksha cave.

1905. Stayed in Pachiamman Koil for six months during the plague ravages. Again on the hill.

1908. January, February and March in Pachiamman Koil. Again on the hill.

1916. Skandasramam.

1922. The Ramanasramam site on the southern slope of the Hill.

25th September, 1935

Talk 72.

Mr. K. S. N. Iyer, a railway officer, asked about *japa*.

M.: The utterance and then remembrance and later meditation are the successive stages finally ending in involuntary and eternal *japa*. The *japakarta* (doer of *japa*) of that kind is the Self. Of all the *japas*, 'Who am I?' is the best.

27th September, 1935

Talk 73.

Mr. Ekanatha Rao, the engineer, asked, "What about the despondency of not obtaining any encouragement from the Master - much less his Grace?"

M.: It is ignorance only. The quest must be made as to who is despondent and so on. It is the phantom of the ego arising after sleep which falls a prey to such thoughts. In deep sleep the person was not afflicted. Who is afflicted now while awake? The sleep state is about the normal one. Let him search and find out.

D.: But there is no incentive for want of encouragement.

M.: Does not one find some kind of peace while in meditation? That is the sign of progress. That peace will be deeper and more prolonged with continued practice. It will also lead to the goal. *Bhagavad Gita* - Chapter XIV - the final verses speak of *gunatita* (one who has transcended the *gunas*). That is the final stage.

The earlier stages are *asuddha satva* (impure being), *misra satva* (mixed being), and *suddha satva* (Pure Being).

Of these, the impure being is when overpowered by *rajas* and *tamas*; the mixed being is that state in which the being - *satva* - asserts itself spasmodically; the *suddha satva* overpowers *rajas* and *tamas*. After these successive stages there comes the state transcending *gunas*.

Talk 74.

Mr. Frydman, the engineer, writes in one of his letters: “Maharshi is with me not only when I think of Him but also when I am not thinking of Him. Otherwise, how do I live?”

Talk 75.

Mr. Grant Duff, formerly in a foreign embassy, writes: .... Pay my respects to Maharshi. He appears to me in my thoughts not only as an *answer* to my questions but also as *Presence*....

29th September, 1935

Talk 76.

Mr. K. S. N. Iyer said that he was not convinced how spiritual life could be reconciled to worldly activities. The Master in answer cited some verses from *Yoga Vasishta*. (The original is said to be millions of verses, of which only 32,000 stanzas are now found in the Sanskrit text. It was condensed to 6,000 and called *Laghu Vasishta*. The latter has been rendered in Tamil in 2,050 stanzas).

D.: Without the mind concentrating on it the work cannot be performed satisfactorily. How is the mind to be spiritually disposed and the work kept going as well?

M.: The mind is only a projection from the Self, appearing in the waking state. In deep sleep, you do not say whose son you are and so on. As soon as you wake up you say you are so and so, and recognise the world and so on. The world is only *lokah*, *lokah* = *lokyate iti lokah* (what is perceived is the world). That which is seen is *lokah* or the world. Which is the eye that sees it? That is the ego which rises and sinks periodically. But you exist always. Therefore That which lies beyond the ego is consciousness - the Self.

In deep sleep mind is merged and not destroyed. That which merges reappears. It may happen in meditation also. But the mind which is destroyed cannot reappear. The yogi’s aim must be to destroy it and not to sink in *laya*. In the peace of *dhyana*, *laya* ensues but it is not enough. It must be supplemented by other practices for destroying the mind. Some people have gone into *samadhi* with a trifling thought

and after a long time awakened in the trail of the same thought. In the meantime generations have passed away in the world. Such a *yogi* has not destroyed his mind. Its destruction is the non-recognition of it as being apart from the Self. Even now the mind *is not*. Recognise it. How can you do it if not in everyday activities. They go on automatically. Know that the mind promoting them is not real but a phantom proceeding from the Self. That is how the mind is destroyed.

Talk 77.

The Master, while referring to the Bible for "Be still and know that I am God", Psalm 46, found in the Ecclesiastes. "There is one alone and there is no second" and "The wise man's heart is at the right hand and a fool's heart is at the left."

Talk 78.

A man from Masulla asked the Master: "How to realise the Self?"

M.: Everyone has experience of the Self every moment of his life.

D.: But the Self is not realised as one would like.

M.: Yes. The present experience is *viparita* - different from real. What is not is confounded with what is.

D.: How to find the Atman?

M.: There is no investigation into the Atman. The investigation can only be into the non-self. Elimination of the non-self is alone possible. The Self being always self evident will shine forth of itself.

The Self is called by different names - Atman, God, *Kundalini*, *mantra*, etc. Hold any one of them and the Self becomes manifest. God is no other than the Self. *Kundalini* is now showing forth as the mind. When the mind is traced to its source it is *Kundalini*. *Mantra japa* leads to elimination of other thoughts and to concentration on the *mantra*. The *mantra* finally merges into the Self and shines forth as the Self.

D.: How long is a Guru necessary for Self-Realisation?

M.: Guru is necessary so long as there is the *laghu*. (Pun on Guru = heavy; *laghu* = light). *Laghu* is due to the self-imposed but wrong limitation of the Self. God, on being worshipped, bestows steadiness

in devotion which leads to surrender. On the devotee surrendering, God shows His mercy by manifesting as the Guru. The Guru, otherwise God, guides the devotee, saying that God is in you and He is the Self. This leads to introversion of the mind and finally to realisation.

Effort is necessary up to the state of realisation. Even then the Self should spontaneously become evident. Otherwise happiness will not be complete. Up to that state of spontaneity there must be effort in some form or another.

D.: Our work-a-day life is not compatible with such efforts.

M.: Why do you think that you are active? Take the gross example of your arrival here. You left home in a cart, took train, alighted at the Railway Station here, got into a cart there and found yourself in this Asramam. When asked, you say that you travelled here all the way from your town. Is it true? Is it not a fact that you remained as you were and there were movements of conveyances all along the way. Just as those movements are confounded with your own, so also the other activities. They are not your own. They are God's activities.

D.: Such idea will lead to blankness of mind and the work will not progress well.

M.: Go up to that blankness and tell me afterwards.

D.: They say that a visit to Sages helps Self-Realisation?

M.: Yes. So it does.

D.: Will not my present visit to you bring it about?

M.: (After a short pause) What is to be brought about? To whom? Consider; investigate. To whom is this doubt. If the source is traced the doubt will disappear.

Talk 79.

An engineer asked: "The animals seem to conform to their own natural laws in spite of their environment and changes. Whereas man flouts social law and is not bound by any definite system. He seems to be degenerating whereas the animals are steady. Is it not so?"

M.: (After a long time). The Upanishads and scriptures say that human beings are only animals unless they are realised beings. Possibly they are worse also.

3rd October, 1935

Talk 80.

A very devoted and simple disciple had lost his only son, a child of three years. The next day he arrived at the Asramam with his family. The Master spoke with reference to them: "Training of mind helps one to bear sorrows and bereavements with courage. But the loss of one's offspring is said to be the worst of all griefs. Grief exists only so long as one considers oneself to be of a definite form. If the form is transcended one will know that the one Self is eternal. There is no death nor birth. That which is born is only the body. The body is the creation of the ego. But the ego is not ordinarily perceived without the body. It is always identified with the body. It is the thought which matters. Let the sensible man consider if he knew his body in deep sleep. Why does he feel it in the waking state? But, although the body was not felt in sleep, did not the Self exist then? How was he in deep sleep? How is he when awake? What is the difference? Ego rises up and that is waking. Simultaneously thoughts arise. Let him find out to whom are the thoughts. Wherefrom do they arise? They must spring up from the conscious Self. Apprehending it even vaguely helps the extinction of the ego. Thereafter the realisation of the one Infinite Existence becomes possible. In that state there are no individuals other than the Eternal Existence. Hence there is no thought of death or wailing.

"If a man considers he is born he cannot avoid the fear of death. Let him find out if he has been born or if the Self has any birth. He will discover that the Self always exists, that the body which is born resolves itself into thought and that the emergence of thought is the root of all mischief. Find wherefrom thoughts emerge. Then you will abide in the ever-present inmost Self and be free from the idea of birth or the fear of death."

A disciple asked how to do it.

M.: The thoughts are only *vasanas* (predispositions), accumulated in innumerable births before. Their annihilation is the aim. The state free from *vasanas* is the primal state and eternal state of purity.

D.: It is not clear yet.

M.: Everyone is aware of the eternal Self. He sees so many dying but still believes himself eternal. Because it is the Truth. Unwillingly the natural Truth asserts itself. The man is deluded by the intermingling of the conscious Self with the insentient body. This delusion must end.

D.: How will it end?

M.: That which is born must end. The delusion is only concomitant with the ego. It rises up and sinks. But the Reality never rises nor sinks. It remains Eternal. The master who has realised says so; the disciple hears, thinks over the words and realises the Self. There are two ways of putting it.

The ever-present Self needs no efforts to be realised, Realisation is already there. Illusion alone is to be removed. Some say the word from the mouth of the Master removes it instantaneously. Others say that meditation, etc., are necessary for realisation. Both are right; only the standpoints differ.

D.: Is *dhyana* necessary?

M.: The Upanishads say that even the Earth is in eternal *dhyana*.

D.: How does Karma help it? Will it not add to the already heavy load to be removed?

M.: Karma done unselfishly purifies the mind and helps to fix it in meditation.

D.: What if one meditates incessantly without Karma?

M.: Try and see. The *vasanas* will not let you do it. *Dhyana* comes only step by step with the gradual weakening of the *vasanas* by the Grace of the Master.

15th October, 1935

Talk 81.

Dr. Bernhard Bey, an American Chemist who had interested himself in *Vedanta* for the last twenty years, now in India, came on a visit to the Master. He asked: "How is *abhyasa* to be made? I am trying to find the Light." (He himself explained *abhyasa* as concentration = one-pointedness of mind.)

The Master asked, what was his *abhyasa* till now.

The visitor said he concentrated on the nasal base, but his mind wandered.

M.: Is there a mind?

Another devotee gently put in: The mind is only a collection of thoughts.

M.: To whom are the thoughts? If you try to locate the mind, the mind vanishes and the Self alone remains. Being alone, there can be no one-pointedness or otherwise.

D.: It is so difficult to understand this. If something concrete is said, it can be readily grasped. *Japa, dhyana*, etc., are more concrete.

M.: 'Who am I?' is the best *japa*.

What could be more concrete than the Self? It is within each one's experience every moment. Why should he try to catch anything outside, leaving out the Self? Let each one try to find out the known Self instead of searching for the unknown something beyond.

D.: Where shall I meditate on the Atman? I mean in which part of the body?

M.: The Self should manifest itself. That is all that is wanted.

A devotee gently added: On the right of the chest, there is the Heart, the seat of the Atman.

Another devotee: The illumination is in that centre when the Self is realised.

M.: Quite so.

D.: How to turn the mind away from the world?

M.: Is there the world? I mean apart from the Self? Does the world say that it exists? It is you who say that there is a world. Find out the Self who says it.

16th October, 1935

Talk 82.

A question was raised about the differences in the various *samadhis*.

M.: When the senses are merged in darkness it is deep sleep; when merged in light it is *samadhi*. Just as a passenger when asleep in a carriage is unaware of the motion, the halting or the unharnessing of the horses, so also a *jnani* in *sahaja samadhi* is unaware of the

happenings, waking, dream and deep sleep. Here sleep corresponds to the unharnessing of the horses. And *samadhi* corresponds to the halting of the horses, because the senses are ready to act just as the horses are ready to move after halting.

In *samadhi* the head does not bend down because the senses are there though inactive; whereas the head bends down in sleep because the senses are merged in darkness. In *kevala samadhi*, the activities (vital and mental), waking, dream and sleep, are only merged, ready to emerge after regaining the state other than *samadhi*. In *sahaja samadhi* the activities, vital and mental, and the three states are destroyed, never to reappear. However, others notice the *jnani* active *e.g.*, eating, talking, moving etc. He is not himself aware of these activities, whereas others are aware of his activities. They pertain to his body and not to his Real Self, *swarupa*. For himself, he is like the sleeping passenger - or like a child interrupted from sound sleep and fed, being unaware of it. The child says the next day that he did not take milk at all and that he went to sleep without it. Even when reminded he cannot be convinced. So also in *sahaja samadhi*.

Sushumna pare leena. Here *sushumna* refers to *tapo marge* whereas the *para nadi* refers to *jnana marga*.

Talk 83.

The Master relating some stories of the *bhaktas* told how Sri Krishna served Eknath for twelve years, how Panduranga relieved Sakku Bai from her home prison and enabled her to visit Pandharpur.

Then he recollected the appearance of a mysterious Moulvi on his way from Madura to Tiruvannamalai in 1896, how he appeared, spoke and disappeared suddenly.

Talk 84.

Mr. Grant Duff asked the Master if any mongoose had had anything to do with him. The Master said, “Yes. It was the occasion of Ardra and Jayanti, I was living up the hill in Skandasramam. Streams of visitors were climbing up the hill from the town A mongoose, larger than the ordinary size, of golden hue (not grey as a mongoose is), with no black spot on its tail as is usual with the wild mongoose, passed these crowds fearlessly. People took

it to be a tame one belonging to someone in the crowd. The animal went straight to Palaniswami, who was having a bath in the spring by the Virupaksha Cave. He stroked the creature and patted it. It followed him into the cave, inspected every nook and corner and left the place and joined the crowd to pass up to Skandasramam. I noticed it. Everyone was struck by its attractive appearance and its fearless movements. It came up to me, got on my lap and rested there some time. Then it raised itself up, looked about and moved down; it went round the whole place and I followed it lest it should be harmed by the unwary visitors or by the peacocks. Two peacocks of the place looked at it inquisitively, whereas the mongoose moved nonchalantly from place to place and finally disappeared into the rocks on the south-east of the Asramam."

Talk 85.

The same gentleman asked the Master about the material relation between memory and will and their relation to the mind.

M.: They are functions of the mind The mind is the outcome of the ego and the ego is from the Self.

6th November, 1935

Talk 86.

The Master gave the true significance of the Christian faith thus:

Christ is the ego.

The Cross is the body.

When the ego is crucified, and it perishes, what survives is the Absolute Being (God), (*cf*. "I and my Father are one") and this glorious survival is called Resurrection.

Talk 87.

Major A. W. Chadwick, an ardent English devotee, asked, "Why did Jesus call out 'My God! My God!' while being crucified?"

M.: It might have been an intercession on behalf of the two thieves who were crucified with Him. Again a *jnani* has attained liberation even while alive, here and now. It is immaterial as to how, where and when he leaves his body. Some *jnanis* may appear to suffer, others may be

in *samadhi*, still others may disappear from sight before death. But that makes no difference to their *jnana*. Such suffering is apparent only to the onlooker and not to the *jnani*, for he has already transcended the mistaken identity of the Self with the body.

Talk 88.

The same gentleman asked: What is the significance of Christ in the illumination of St. Paul?

M.: Illumination is absolute, not associated with forms. After St. Paul became Self-conscious he identified the illumination with Christ-consciousness.

D.: But Paul was not a lover of Christ then?

M.: Love or hatred is immaterial. The thought of Christ was there. It is similar to Ravana's case. Christ-consciousness and Self-Realisation are all the same.

Talk 89.

M.: Karpura arati is symbolic of the burning away of the mind by the light of illumination, *vibhuti* (sacred ashes) is Siva (Absolute Be-ing) and *kunkuma* (vermilion powder) is Sakti (consciousness).

Vibhuti is of two kinds: *Para vibhuti* and *apara vibhuti*. The sacred ashes are of the latter class. The *para* is what remains over after all the dross has been burnt away by the Fire of Realisation. It is Absolute Being.

Talk 90.

Again, the Trinity was explained:

God the Father represents Isvara

God the Holy Spirit represents Atman

God the Son represents Guru

Isvaro gururatmeti murti bheda vibhagine vyomavad vyapta dehaya dakshinamurtaye namah:

Meaning that God appears to his devotee in the form of a Guru (son of God) and points out to him the immanence of the Holy Spirit. That is to say that God is spirit, that this spirit is immanent everywhere and that the Self must be realised, which is the same as realising God.

Talk 91.

A Bengali visitor asked: How is the mind controlled?

M.: What do you call 'the mind'?

D.: When I sit down to think of God, thoughts wander away to other objects. I want to control those thoughts.

M.: In the *Bhagavad Gita* it is said that it is the nature of the mind to wander. One must bring one's thoughts to bear on God. By long practice the mind is controlled and made steady.

The wavering of the mind is a weakness arising from the dissipation of its energy in the shape of thoughts. When one makes the mind stick to one thought the energy is conserved, and the mind becomes stronger.

D.: What is the meaning of the strength of the mind?

M.: Its ability to concentrate on one thought without being distracted.

D.: How is that achieved?

M.: By practice. A devotee concentrates on God; a seeker, follower of the *jnana-marga*, seeks the Self. The practice is equally difficult for both.

D.: Even if the mind is brought to bear on the search for the Self, after a long struggle the mind begins to elude him and the man is not aware of the mischief until after some time.

M.: So it would be. In the earlier stages the mind reverts to the search at long intervals; with continued practice it reverts at shorter intervals until finally it does not wander at all. It is then that the dormant *sakti* manifests. The *satvic* mind is free from thoughts whereas the *rajasic* mind is full of them. The *sattvic* mind resolves itself into the Life-current.

D.: Can one keep the mind away from entering into the phase of thoughts before one experiences the current?

M.: Yes; the current is pre-existent.

7th November, 1935

Talk 92.

A visitor said: Some say that one should practise meditation on gross objects only: it may be disastrous if one constantly seeks to kill the mind.

M.: For whom is it disastrous? Can there be disaster apart from the Self?

Unbroken 'I-I' is the ocean infinite, the ego, 'I' thought, remains only a bubble on it and is called *jiva*, *i.e.*, individual soul. The bubble too is water; when it bursts it only mixes in the ocean. When it remains a bubble it is still a part of the ocean. Ignorant of this simple truth, innumerable methods under different denominations, such as yoga, *bhakti*, karma....... each again with many modifications, are being taught with great skill and in intricate detail only to entice the seekers and confuse their minds. So also are the religions and sects and dogmas. What are they all for? Only for knowing the Self. They are aids and practices required for knowing the Self.

Objects perceived by the senses are spoken of as immediate knowledge (*pratyaksha*). Can anything be as direct as the Self - always experienced without the aid of the senses? Sense-perceptions can only be indirect knowledge, and not direct knowledge. Only one's own awareness is direct knowledge, as is the common experience of one and all. No aids are needed to know one's own Self, *i.e.*, to be aware.

The one Infinite Unbroken Whole (plenum) becomes aware of itself as 'I'. This is its original name. All other names, *e.g.*, OM, are later growths. Liberation is only to remain aware of the Self. The *mahavakya* "I am *Brahman*" is its authority. Though the 'I' is always experienced, yet one's attention has to be drawn to it. Only then does knowledge dawn. Thus the need for the instruction of the Upanishads and of wise sages.

9th November, 1935

Talk 93.

All are aware of their own Self only. Wonder of wonders! They take what is not as what is, or they see the phenomena apart from the Self. Only so long as there is the knower is there knowledge of all kinds (direct, inferential, intellectual etc.); should the knower vanish they all vanish together with him; their validity is of the same degree as his.

Talk 94.

A man prayed to the Master to pardon his sins. He was told that it would be enough if he took care to see that his mind did not trouble him.

13th November, 1935

Talk 95.

A question was raised as follows by Maj. A. W. Chadwick:-

Mr. Edward Carpenter, a certain mystic, has written in a book that he had Self-Realisation on some occasions and that its effects lasted sometimes afterwards, only to be gradually lost. Whereas *Sri Ramana Gita* says, "*Granthi* (knot = bondage), snapped once, is snapped for ever." In the case of this mystic, the bondage seems to have persisted even after Self-Realisation. How can it be so?

The Master cited *Kaivalya* as follows:-

> The disciple, after realising the all-shining, unitary, unbroken state of Being-Knowledge-Bliss, surrendered himself to the master and humbly prayed to know how he could repay the master's Grace. The Master said:
>
> "My reward consists in your permanent unbroken Bliss. Do not slip away from it."

D.: Having once experienced the Supreme Bliss, how can one stray away from it?

M.: Oh yes! It happens. The predisposition adhering to him from time immemorial will draw him out and so ignorance overtakes him.

D.: What are the obstacles to remaining steady in unbroken Bliss? How can they be overcome?

M.: The obstacles are:

(1) Ignorance which is forgetfulness of one's pure being.

(2) Doubt which consists in wondering if even the experience was of the Real or of the unreal.

(3) Error which consists in the "I-am-the-body" idea, and thinking that the world is real. These are overcome by hearing the truth, reflection on it and concentration.

The Master continued: Experience is said to be temporary or permanent. The first experience is temporary and by concentration it can become permanent. In the former the bondage is not

completely destroyed; it remains subtle and reasserts itself in due course. But in the latter it is destroyed root and branch, never to appear again. The expression *yogabhrashta* (those who have fallen down from yoga) in *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* refers to the former class of men.

D.: Is then hearing the Truth meant only for a limited few?

M.: It is of two kinds. The ordinary one is to hear it enunciated and explained by a master. However, the right one is to raise the question for oneself and seek and find the answer in oneself as the unbroken 'I-I'.

To be reflecting on this experience is the second stage. To remain one-pointed in it is the third stage.

D.: Can the temporary experience be called *samadhi*?

M.: No. It forms part of the third stage.

D.: It looks then as if even hearing the Truth is limited to a very few.

M.: The seekers fall into two classes; *kritopasaka* and *akritopasaka*. The former having already overcome his predisposition by steady devotion, his mind thus made pure, has had some kind of experience but does not comprehend it; as soon as instructed by a competent master, permanent experience results.

The other class of seeker needs great effort to achieve this end. How will the hearing of the Truth, reflection and concentration help him?

They comprise *upasana* (the nearest approach to Truth) and will end in his Self-Realization.

The fourth stage is the final one of liberation. Even there some distinction is made according to the degree, as

(1) the knower of the Brahman (*Brahmavid*)

(2) *Brahmavid-vara*

(3) *Brahmavid-varya*

(4) *Brahmavid-varishta*

But all of them are in fact liberated even while alive.

Talk 96.

Maj. A. W. Chadwick: Of what nature is the realisation of Westerners who relate that they have had flashes of cosmic consciousness?

M.: It came as a flash and disappeared as such. That which has a beginning must also end. Only when the ever-present consciousness is realised will it be permanent. Consciousness is indeed always with us. Everyone knows 'I am!' No one can deny his own being. The man in deep slumber is not aware; while awake he seems to be aware. But it is the same person. There is no change in the one who slept and the one who is now awake. In deep sleep he was not aware of his body; there was no body-consciousness. In the wakeful state he is aware of his body; there is body-consciousness. Therefore the difference lies in the emergence of body-consciousness and not in any change in the Real Consciousness. The body and body-consciousness arise together and sink together. All this amounts to saying that there are no limitations in deep sleep, whereas there are limitations in the waking state. These limitations are the bondage; the feeling 'The body is I' is the error. This false sense of 'I' must go. The real 'I' is always there. It is *here and now*. It never appears anew and disappears again. That which is must also persist for ever. That which appears anew will also be lost. Compare deep sleep and waking. The body appears in one state but not in the other. Therefore the body will be lost. The consciousness was pre-existent and will survive the body. In fact, there is no one who does not say 'I am'. The wrong knowledge of 'I am the body' is the cause of all the mischief. This wrong knowledge must go. That is Realisation. Realisation is not acquisition of anything new nor it is a new faculty. It is only removal of all camouflage.

Maj. Chadwick: I try to shake off the body.

M.: A man shakes off his clothes and remains alone and free. The Self is unlimited and is not confined to the body. How can the body be shaken off? Where will he leave it? Wherever it is, it is his still.

Maj. Chadwick: (Laughter.)

M.: The ultimate Truth is so simple. It is nothing more than being in the pristine state. This is all that need be said.

Still, it is a wonder that to teach this simple Truth there should come into being so many religions, creeds, methods and disputes among them and so on! Oh the pity! Oh the pity!

Maj. Chadwick: But people will not be content with simplicity; they want complexity.

M.: Quite so. Because they want something elaborate and attractive and puzzling, so many religions have come into existence and each of them is so complex and each creed in each religion has its own adherents and antagonists.

For example, an ordinary Christian will not be satisfied unless he is told that God is somewhere in the far-off Heavens not to be reached by us unaided. Christ alone knew Him and Christ alone can guide us. Worship Christ and be saved. If told the simple truth - "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" - he is not satisfied and will read complex and far-fetched meanings in such statements. Mature minds alone can grasp the simple Truth in all its nakedness.

Maj. Chadwick later expressed a certain involuntary fear while meditating. He feels the spirit separated from the gross body and the sensation creates a fright.

M.: To whom is the fright? It is all due to the habit of identifying the body with the Self. Repeated experience of separation will make one familiar and the fright will cease.

19th November, 1935

Talk 97.

One Mr. Ramachandar, a gentleman from Ambala, asked where the Heart is and what Realisation is.

M.: The Heart is not physical; it is spiritual. *Hridayam = hrit + ayam* - This is the centre. It is that from which thoughts arise, on which they subsist and where they are resolved. The thoughts are the content of the mind and, they shape the universe. The Heart is the centre of all. *Yatova imani bhutani jayante* (that from which these beings come

into existence) etc. is said to be Brahman in the Upanishads. That is the Heart. Brahman is the Heart.

D.: How to realise the Heart?

M.: There is no one who even for a trice fails to experience the Self. For no one admits that he ever stands apart from the Self. He is the Self. The Self is the Heart.

D.: It is not clear.

M.: In deep sleep you exist; awake, you remain. The same Self is in both states. The difference is only in the awareness and the non-awareness of the world. The world rises with the mind and sets with the mind. That which rises and sets is not the Self. The Self is different, giving rise to the mind, sustaining it and resolving it. So the Self is the underlying principle.

When asked who you are, you place your hand on the right side of the breast and say 'I am'. There you involuntarily point out the Self. The Self is thus known. But the individual is miserable because he confounds the mind and the body with the Self. This confusion is due to wrong knowledge. Elimination of wrong knowledge is alone needed. Such elimination results in Realisation.

D.: How to control the mind?

M.: What is mind? Whose is the mind?

D.: Mind always wanders. I cannot control it.

M.: It is the nature of the mind to wander. You are not the mind. The mind springs up and sinks down. It is impermanent, transitory, whereas you are eternal. There is nothing but the Self. To inhere in the Self is the thing. Never mind the mind. If its source is sought, it will vanish leaving the Self unaffected.

D.: So one need not seek to control the mind?

M.: There is no mind to control if you realise the Self. The mind vanishing, the Self shines forth. In the realised man the mind may be active or inactive, the Self alone remains for him. For the mind, the body and the world are not separate from the Self. They rise from and sink into the Self. They do not remain apart from the Self. Can they be different from the Self? Only be aware of the Self. Why worry about these shadows? How do they affect the Self?

Talk 98.

Bhagavan further explained: The Self is the Heart. The Heart is self-luminous. Light arises from the Heart and reaches the brain, which is the seat of the mind. The world is seen with the mind, that is, by the reflected light of the Self. It is perceived with the aid of the mind. When the mind is illumined it is aware of the world. When it is not itself so illumined, it is not aware of the world. If the mind is turned in towards the source of light, objective knowledge ceases and Self alone shines forth as the Heart.

The moon shines by the reflected light of the sun. When the sun has set, the moon is useful for revealing objects. When the sun has risen, no one needs the moon, although the pale disc of the moon is visible in the sky.

So it is with the mind and the Heart. The mind is useful because of its reflected light. It is used for seeing objects. When it is turned inwards, the source of illumination shines forth by itself, and the mind remains dim and useless like the moon in day-time.

Talk 99.

A sannyasi asked: It is said that the Self is beyond the mind and yet the realisation is with the mind. *Mano na manute*, *Manasa na matam*, and *Manasaivedamaptavyam* (The mind cannot think it. It cannot be thought of by the mind and the mind alone can realise it). How are these contradictions to be reconciled?

M.: Atman is realised with *mruta manas* (dead mind), *i.e.*, mind devoid of thoughts and turned inward. Then the mind sees its own source and becomes That. It is not as the subject perceiving an object.

When the room is dark a lamp is necessary to illumine and eyes to cognise objects. But when the sun is risen there is no need of a lamp, and the objects are seen; and to see the sun no lamp is necessary, it is enough that you turn your eyes towards the self-luminous sun.

Similarly with the mind. To see the objects the reflected light of the mind is necessary. To see the Heart it is enough that the mind is turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.

Talk 100.

Later Sri Bhagavan quoted from *Kaivalya* some verses and explained:

A

The Supreme
(Knowledge Absolute; witness; the Self-shining core;
the Heart; the Self)

↓

the individual
[the *jiva*, the knower consisting of *vritti* (the mode
of mind stuff) and reflected light, in the latent form]

↓

the internal intellect and the outgoing mind
[*buddhi* and *manas* consisting of *vritti* and reflected light,
as a sprout, this is the *antahkarana* (the inner organ)]

↓ ↓

modes taking shape as objects | common knowledge

together form the world as we perceive it

B

The Self (Pure Knowledge)

↓

the *jiva* (*pramatr* = the knower)

↓

the intellect and the mind
(*pramana* = perception)

↓ ↓

modes seen as objects | knowledge (*phala chaitanya*)

The modes of mind take shape as external objects and the light reflected on the modes illumines the objects. Now neglecting the modes

of mind, look for the light illumining them. The mind becomes still and the light remains self-shining. The undulating mind (*i.e.*, the mind associated with *rajas* = activity and *tamas* = darkness) is commonly known as the mind. Devoid of *rajas* and *tamas*, it is pure and self-shining. This is Self-Realisation. Therefore the mind is said to be the means for it.

C

Pure Consciousness
(said to be the Eternal or the Ever-present Witness)

↓

(*antahkarana*)
Inner organ + the reflected light (*jiva; pramtr*)

↓

modes together with the light are said to be *prameya* = the known; of these, the objects are gross and the light is called *phala chaitanya*.

D

In the *jiva* the inner organ (*antahkarana*) consists of -

Satva	*Rajas*	*Tamas*
knowledge, light	modes of mind, intellect, mind	gross objects, the world

Similarly for the cosmos:-
The Cosmic mind (the Eternal Being)

Satva	*Rajas*	*Tamas*
Isvara - the Lord of the universe	the individual *jiva*	the universe

E

Brahman =	*Sat*	*Chit*	*Ananda*
	Being, called the *adhara* = the substratum	Knowledge	Bliss

Chit and *Ananda*: Called *visesha* = differentiation by *maya*

- natural: the universe or the world
- artificial: multiplicity of objects

Maya cannot obscure *Sat*, but it does obscure *Chit* and *Ananda*, making them appear as particulars.

F

A rope corresponds to	in dim light	appears as a snake
↓	↓	↓
Being; the substratum	*maya* illusion	the artificial particular as shown in E

G

Sat = Being = the substratum (*adhara*). From this proceeds the particular, namely the *jiva* who veiled by ignorance identifies himself with the gross body. Here ignorance stands for not investigating the Self. *Jiva* is in fact knowledge only; yet owing to ignorance the wrong identity with the gross body results.

H

Again, the Master illustrated it with the red-hot iron ball (*tapta-ayah-pindavat*).

A ball of iron + fire together form red-hot iron ball. The World + *Chit* = (Pure Knowledge) together form the *jiva* = the individual.

Talk 101.

A gentleman from Ambala asked: What is the rationalistic explanation of Draupadi's sari becoming endless?

M.: Spiritual matters cannot be fitted into rationalism. Spirituality is transcendental. The miracle was after Draupadi had surrendered herself. The secret lies in surrender.

D.: How to reach the Heart?

M.: Where are you now that you want to reach the Heart? Are you standing apart from the Self?

D.: I am in my body.

M.: In a particular spot, or all over?

D.: All over. I am extending all over the body.

M.: Wherefrom do you extend?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Yes. You are always in the Heart. You are never away from it in order that you should reach it. Consider how you are in deep sleep and in the waking state. These states are also not yours. They are of the ego. The consciousness remains the same and undifferentiated all through.

D.: I understand but I cannot feel it so.

M.: Whose is the ignorance? Find it out.

D.: All this is so difficult.

M.: The idea of difficulty is itself wrong. It will not help you to gain what you want. Again I ask: "Who finds it difficult?"

D.: I see that I am coming round to 'I'.

M.: Because you are always that and never away from that. There is nothing so simple as being the Self. It requires no effort, no aid. One has to leave off the wrong identity and be in his eternal, natural, inherent state.

Talk 102.

He returned with a request next day. He said, "It is said that one should receive instruction from a Guru. Mere reading of books is not helpful. I have read many books; but there is no practical help derived

from such learning. Please tell me what I should do, how I should do it, at what times, in which places, and so on."

The Master remained silent. His silence seemed to say, "Here and now, be at peace and tranquil. That is all". But the questioner could not interpret it that way; he wanted something concrete.

Talk 103.

The next day Sri Bhagavan said: These people want some *japa*, *dhyana*, or yoga or something similar. Without their saying what they have been doing so far what more can be said to them? Again, why *japa*, its *phalasruti*, etc.? Who is it that makes the *japa*? Who gets the fruits thereof? Can they not look to the Self? Or again, even if instructed by others to do *japa* or *dhyana*, they do it for some time, but are always looking to some results, *e.g.*, visions, dreams, or thaumaturgic powers. If they do not find them they say they are not progressing or the *tapas* is not effective. Visions, etc., are no signs of progress. Mere performance of *tapas* is its progress also. Steadiness is what is required. Moreover they must entrust themselves to their *mantra* or their God and wait for its Grace. They don't do so. *Japa* even once uttered has its own good effect, whether the individual is aware or not.

28th November, 1935

Talk 104.

Mr. Kishorilal, an officer of the Railway Board, Government of India, hails from Delhi. He looks simple, gentle and dignified in behaviour. He has gastric ulcer and has arranged for his board and lodging in the town.

Five years ago he took up the study of devotional literature. He is a *bhakta* of Sri Krishna. He could feel Krishna in all that he saw. Krishna often appeared to him and made him happy. His work was going on without any effort on his part. Everything seemed to be done for him by Krishna himself.

Later he came in contact with a Mahatma who advised him to study Vedanta and take to *nirakara upasana*, *i.e.*, devotion to formless Being. He has since read about seven hundred books of philosophy and Vedanta, including the Upanishads, *Ashtavakra*, *Avadhuta* and

Srimad Bhagavad Gita. He has also studied Sri Bhagavan's works in English and is much impressed by them.

Once when he was in the jaws of death, no other thought haunted him but that he had not yet visited Sri Bhagavan in his life. So he has come here on a short visit. He prays only for Sri Bhagavan's touch and His Grace.

The Master said to him: *atmaivaham gudakesa*, *i.e.*, I am Atman; Atman is the Guru; and Atman is Grace also. No one remains without the Atman. He is always in contact. No external touch is necessary.

D.: I understand. I do not mean external touch.

M.: Nothing is more intimate than the Atman.

D.: Again Sri Krishna appeared to me three months back and said, "Why do you ask me for *nirakara upasana*? It is only *sarva bhutesu cha atmanam sarva bhutani cha atmani*. (The Self in all and all in the Self.)

M.: That contains the whole truth. Even this is *oupacharika* (indirect). There is in fact nothing but the Atman. The world is only a projection of the mind. The mind originates from the Atman. So Atman alone is the One Being.

D.: Yet it is difficult to realise.

M.: There is nothing to realise. It is *nitya suddha buddha mukta* (the Eternal, pure, aware and liberated) state. It is natural and eternal. There is nothing new to gain. On the other hand a man must loose his ignorance. That is all.

This ignorance must be traced to its origin. To whom is this ignorance? Of what is one ignorant? There are the subject and the object. Such duality is characteristic of the mind. The mind is from the Atman.

D.: Yes. Ignorance itself cannot exist. (He finally surrendered saying, "Just as a doctor learns what is wrong with the patient and treats him accordingly, so may Sri Bhagavan do with me". He also said that he had lost all inclination to study books and learn from them.)

Talk 105.

M.: Yena asrutam srutam bhavati (*Chandogya Upanishad*). (By knowing which, all the unknown becomes known.)

Madhavaswami, Bhagavan's attendant: Are there nine methods of teaching the *Mahavakya 'Tattvamasi'* in the *Chandogya Upanishad*?

M.: No. Not so. The method is only one. Uddalaka started teaching *Sat eva Somya* (There is only Being) illustrating it with Svetaketu's fast.

(1) *Sat*, the Being in the individual, is made obvious by the fast.

(2) This (*sat*) Being is similar in all, as honey gathered from different flowers.

(3) There is no difference in the *sat* of individuals as illustrated by the state of deep sleep. The question arises - if so, why does not each know it in sleep?

(4) Because the individuality is lost. There is only *sat* left. Illustration: rivers lost in the ocean. If lost, is there *sat*?

(5) Surely - as when a tree is pruned it grows again. That is a sure sign of its life. But is it there even in that dormant condition?

(6) Yes, take the instance of salt and water. The presence of the salt in water is subtle. Though invisible to the eye it is recognised by other senses. How is one to know it? What is the other means?

(7) By enquiry, as the man left in the Gandhara forest regained his home.

(8) In evolution and involution, in manifestation and resolution, *sat* alone exists. *Tejah parasyam, devatayam* (the light merges in the Supreme).

(9) An insincere man is hurt by the touch of fire test. His insincerity is brought out by fire. Sincerity is Self-evident. A true man or a Self realised man remains happy, without being affected by the false appearances (namely the world, birth and death, etc.), whereas the false or ignorant man is miserable.

29th November, 1935

Talk 106.

Swami Yogananda with four others arrived at 8.45 a.m. He looks big, but gentle and well-groomed. He has dark flowing hair, hanging over his shoulders. The group had lunch in the Asramam.

Mr. C. R. Wright, his secretary, asked: How shall I realise God?

M.: God is an unknown entity. Moreover He is external. Whereas, the Self is always with you and it is you. Why do you leave out what is intimate and go in for what is external?

D.: What is this Self again?

M.: The Self is known to everyone but not clearly. You always exist. The Be-ing is the Self. 'I am' is the name of God. Of all the definitions of God, none is indeed so well put as the Biblical statement "*I AM THAT I AM*" in EXODUS (Chap. 3). There are other statements, such as *Brahmaivaham*, *Aham Brahmasmi* and *Soham*. But none is so direct as the name *JEHOVAH = I AM*. The Absolute Being is *what* is - It is the Self. It is God. Knowing the Self, God is known. In fact God is none other than the Self.

D.: Why are there good and evil?

M.: They are relative terms. There must be a subject to know the good and evil. That subject is the ego. Trace the source of the ego. It ends in the Self. The source of the ego is God. This definition of God is probably more concrete and better understood by you.

D.: So it is. How to get Bliss?

M.: Bliss is not something to be got. On the other hand you are always Bliss. This desire is born of the sense of incompleteness. To whom is this sense of incompleteness? Enquire. In deep sleep you were blissful: Now you are not so. What has interposed between that Bliss and this non-bliss? It is the ego. Seek its source and find you are Bliss.

There is nothing new to get. You have, on the other hand, to get rid of your ignorance which makes you think that you are other than Bliss. For whom is this ignorance? It is to the ego. Trace the source of the ego. Then the ego is lost and Bliss remains over. It is eternal. You are That, here and now.… That is the master key for solving all doubts. The doubts arise in the mind. The mind is born of the ego. The ego rises from the Self. Search the source of the ego and the Self is revealed. That alone remains. The universe is only expanded Self. It is not different from the Self.

D.: What is the best way of living?

M.: It differs according as one is a *jnani* or *ajnani*. A *jnani* does not find anything different or separate from the Self. All are in the Self. It is wrong to imagine that there is the world, that there is a body in it and that you dwell in the body. If the Truth is known, the universe and what is beyond it will be found to be only in the Self. The outlook

differs according to the sight of the person. The sight is from the eye. The eye must be located somewhere. If you are seeing with the gross eyes you find others gross. If with subtle eyes (*i.e.*, the mind) others appear subtle. If the eye becomes the Self, the Self being infinite, the eye is infinite. There is nothing else to see different from the Self.

He thanked Maharshi. He was told that the best way of thanking is to remain always as the Self.

Talk 107.

Later the Yogi asked: How is the spiritual uplift of the people to be effected? What are the instructions to be given them?

M.: They differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds. There cannot be any instruction *en masse*.

D.: Why does God permit suffering in the world? Should He not with His omnipotence do away with it at one stroke and ordain the universal realisation of God?

M.: Suffering is the way for Realisation of God.

D.: Should He not ordain differently?

M.: It is the way.

D.: Are Yoga, religion, etc., antidotes to suffering?

M.: They help you to overcome suffering.

D.: Why should there be suffering?

M.: Who suffers? What is suffering?

No answer! Finally the Yogi rose up, prayed for Sri Bhagavan's blessings for his own work and expressed great regret for his hasty return. He looked very sincere and devoted and even emotional.

Talk 108.

In continuation of dialogue 105: Uddalaka explained that all proceeds from *sat* (as illustrated by deep sleep).

The body takes food. Food requires water. Water requires heat to digest the food. (*Tejo mulamanvichcha*) It is *sat parasyam devatayam* (merged in the Be-ing). If we are *sat sampannah* (merged in the Be-ing), how is it that we do not realise it?

M.: Just as the honey gathered from different flowers forms the bulk in a honeycomb, and each drop does not indicate wherefrom it has been collected, so also *sat sampannah* in deep sleep, death, etc., people do not recognise their individualities. They slip into that state unawares. But when they wake up they regain their original individual characteristics.

D.: Honey, though collected from different flowers, becomes the bulk and does not possess individual characteristics. But the individual parts do not also exist in the drops and they do not return to their sources. Whereas the individuals after going to deep sleep wake up individuals as formerly. How is it?

M.: Just as the rivers discharged into the ocean lose their individualities, still the waters evaporate and return as rain on the hills and through rivers to the ocean, so also the individuals going to sleep lose their individualities and yet return as individuals according to their previous *vasanas* unawares. Thus, even in death, *sat* is not lost.

D.: How can that be?

M.: See how a tree, whose branches are cut, grows again. So long as the life-source is not affected it will grow. Similarly the *samskaras* (anamneses) sink into the heart in death: they do not perish. They will in right time sprout forth from the heart. That is how the *jivas* are reborn.

D.: How does the wide universe sprout forth from such subtle *samskaras* remaining sunk in the heart?

M.: Just as a big banyan tree sprouts from a tiny seed, so the wide universe with names and forms sprouts forth from the heart.

D.: If the origin is *sat* why is it not felt?

M.: The salt in the lump is visible; it is invisible in solution. Still its existence is known by taste. Similarly *sat*, though not recognised by the intellect, can still be realised in a different way, *i.e.*, transcendentally.

D.: How?

M.: Just as a man blindfolded and left by robbers in a jungle enquires his way home and returns there, so also the ignorant one (blinded by ignorance) enquires of those not so blinded and seeks his own source and returns to it.

Then, *Gurupadesa* - "*Vang manasi sampadyate, manah prane, pranastejasi, tejah parasyam devatayam iti.*"

D.: If so, a *jnani* or an *ajnani* dies in the same manner. Why is an *ajnani* reborn, whereas a *jnani* is not?

M.: Just as an innocent man *satyabhisandha* is not affected by the test of touching red hot iron but a thief is affected, so also the *sadbrahma satyabhisandha*, *i.e.*, a *jnani*, enters into *sat* consciously and merges, whereas the other enters unaware and is thrown out unawares also.

13th December, 1935

Talk 109.

Two gentlemen from Ambala (the Punjab) had been here for a few weeks. Just before taking leave of Sri Bhagavan one of them asked how he should remove the spiritual drowsiness of his friends or of other people in general.

M.: Have you removed your own 'spiritual drowsiness?' The force which is set up to remove your own 'drowsiness' will also operate in other centres. There is the will-power with which you can act on others. But it is on a lower plane and not desirable. Take care of yourself first.

D.: How to remove my own 'drowsiness'?

M.: Whose 'drowsiness' is it? Enquire. Turn within. Turn all your enquiries towards search for Self. The force set up within you will operate on others also.

14th December, 1935

Talk 110.

An American lady asked Bhagavan what his experiences of *samadhi* were. When suggested that she should relate her experiences and ask if they were right, she replied that Sri Bhagavan's experiences ought to be correct and should be known, whereas her own were unimportant. She thus wanted to know if Sri Bhagavan felt his body hot or cold in *samadhi*, if he spent the first three and a half years of his stay at Tiruvannamalai in prayers and so on.

M.: Samadhi transcends mind and speech and cannot be described. For example, the state of deep slumber cannot be described; *samadhi* state can still less be explained.

D.: But I know that I am unconscious in deep sleep.

M.: Consciousness and unconsciousness are only modes of the mind. *Samadhi* transcends the mind.

D.: Still you can say what it is like.

M.: You will know only when you are in *samadhi*.

16th December, 1935

Talk 111.

A Telugu gentleman asked about *Brahma bhavana*.

M.: Not to think "I am Brahman" or "All is Brahman" is itself *jivanmukti*.

He asked about inspired action.

M.: Let activities go on. They do not affect the pure Self.

17th December, 1935

Talk 112.

Mr. P. Brunton, while reading *Upadesa Manjari*, came across the statement that the ego, the world and God are all unreal. He desired to use a different word for God or at least a qualifying adjective, *e.g.*, the Creative Force or personal God.

Sri Bhagavan explained that God means *SAMASHTI* - *i.e.*, all that is, *plus* the Be-ing - in the same way as 'I' means the individual *plus* the Be-ing, and the world means the variety plus Be-ing. The Be-ing is in all cases real. The all, the variety and the individual is in each case unreal. So also in the union of the real and the unreal, the mixing up or the false identification is wrong. It amounts to saying *sad-asadvilakshana, i.e.*, transcending the real and the unreal - *sat* and *asat*. Reality is that which transcends all concepts, including that of God. Inasmuch as the name of God is used, it cannot be true. The Hebrew word *Jehovah* = (I am) expresses God correctly. Absolute Be-ing is beyond expression.

The word cannot be replaced nor need it be replaced. The Englishman casually said that in prehistoric ages there was spirituality but not high intellect, whereas intellect has now developed. Sri Bhagavan pointed out that *intellect* raises the question "whose intellect?" The answer is, of the *Self*. So intellect is a tool of the Self. The Self uses intellect for measuring variety. Intellect is not the Self nor apart from the Self. The Self alone is eternal. Intellect is only a phenomenon. People speak of the development of variety as being the development of intellect. Intellect was always there. *Dhata yatha parvam akalpayat* (The Creator created just as before). Consider your own state, day by day. There is no intellect in dreamless deep sleep. But it is there now. There is no intellect in a child. It develops with age. How could there be manifestation of intellect without its seed in the sleep state and in the child? Why go to history to teach this fundamental fact? The level of truth of history is only the level of truth of the individual.

Talk 113.

A Telugu gentleman asked about Karma Yoga. Sri Bhagavan said that the man should act as an actor on the stage. In all actions there is the *sat* as the underlying principle. "Remember it and act." He asked about the purity of mind - *chitta suddhi*. Sri Bhagavan said that *chitta suddhi* is to engage in one thought only to the exclusion of all others. It is otherwise called one-pointedness of the mind. The practice of meditation purifies the mind.

23rd December, 1935

Talk 114.

Baron Von Veltheim - Ostran, an East German Baron, asked, There should be harmony between knowledge of the Self and knowledge of the world. They must develop side by side. Is it right? Does Maharshi agree?

M.: Yes.

D.: Beyond the intellect and before wisdom dawns there will be pictures of the world passing before one's consciousness. Is it so?

Sri Bhagavan pointed out the parallel passage in *Dakshinamurti stotram* to signify that the pictures are like reflections in a mirror;

again from the Upanishad - as in the mirror, so in the world of *manes*, as in the water, so in the world of Gandharvas; as shadow and sunlight in Brahma Loka.

D.: There is spiritual awakening since 1930 all the world over? Does Maharshi agree?

Maharshi said: “The development is according to *your* sight.”

The Baron again asked if Maharshi would induce a spiritual trance and give him a message - which is unspoken but still understandable.

No answer was made.

25th December, 1935

Talk 115.

Mr. M. Frydman: Even without any initial desires there are some strange experiences for us. Wherefrom do they arise?

M.: The desire may not be there now. Enough if it was there before. Though forgotten by you now it is bearing fruit in due course. That is how the *jnani* is said to have *prarabdha* left for him. Of course it is only according to others’ point of view.

Talk 116.

D.: Jiva is said to be bound by karma. Is it so?

M.: Let karma enjoy its fruits. As long as you are the doer so long are you the enjoyer.

D.: How to get released from karma.

M.: See whose karma it is. You will find you are not the doer. Then you will be free. This requires grace of God for which you should pray to Him, worship Him and meditate on Him.

The karma which takes place without effort, *i.e.*, involuntary action, is not binding.

Even a *jnani* is acting as seen by his bodily movements. There can be no karma without effort or without intentions (*sankalpas*). Therefore there are *sankalpas* for all. They are of two kinds (1) one, binding - *bandha-hetu* and the other (2) *mukti-hetu* - not binding. The former must be given up and the latter must be cultivated.

There is no fruit without previous karma; no karma without previous *sankalpa*. Even *mukti* must be the result of effort so long as the sense of doership persists.

Talk 117.

A Ceylonese: What is the first step for Realisation of Self? Please help me towards it. There is no use reading books.

Another: This one man's request is that of us all.

M.: Quite so. If the Self be found in books it would have been already realised. What wonder can be greater than that we seek the Self in books? Can it be found there?

Of course books have given readers the sense to ask this question and to seek the Self.

D.: Books are utterly useless. They may all be burnt. The spoken word alone is useful. Grace alone is useful.

Others spoke according to their own light, until finally they returned to the original question, but Sri Bhagavan remained silent.

Talk 118.

Mr. Rangachari, a Telugu Pandit in Voorhees' College at Vellore, asked about *nishkama karma*. There was no reply. After a time Sri Bhagavan went up the hill and a few followed him, including the pandit. There was a thorny stick lying on the way which Sri Bhagavan picked up; he sat down and began leisurely to work at it. The thorns were cut off, the knots were made smooth, the whole stick was polished with a rough leaf. The whole operation took about six hours. Everyone was wondering at the fine appearance of the stick made of a spiky material. A shepherd boy put in his appearance on the way as the group moved off. He had lost his stick and was at a loss. Sri Bhagavan immediately gave the new one in his hand to the boy and passed on.

The pandit said that this was the matter-of-fact answer to his question.

Talk 119.

Again at the same time there were four dogs in the Asramam. Sri Bhagavan said that those dogs would not accept any food not partaken

by Himself. The pandit put the matter to the test. He spread some food before them; they would not touch it; then Sri Bhagavan, after a time, put a small morsel of it into His mouth. Immediately they fell to and devoured the food.

Talk 120.

Later a man brought two peacocks with their eyes screened. When let loose in Maharshi's presence they flew away to a distance. They were brought back but still they flew away. Sri Bhagavan then said, "It is no use trying to keep them here. They are not ripe in their minds as these dogs." However much they tried to keep the peacocks they would not remain there even a minute.

Talk 121.

Talks between the Master and two Moslems on a previous occasion.

D.: Has God a form?

M.: Who says so?

D.: Well, if God has no form is it proper to worship idols?

M.: Leave God alone because He is unknown. What about you? Have you a form?

D.: Yes. I am this and so and so.

M.: So then, you are a man with limbs, about three and a half cubits high, with beard, etc. Is it so?

D.: Certainly.

M.: Then do you find yourself so in deep sleep?

D.: After waking I perceive that I was asleep. Therefore by inference I remained thus in deep sleep also.

M.: If you are the body why do they bury the corpse after death? The body must refuse to be buried.

D.: No, I am the subtle *jiva* within the gross body.

M.: So you see that you are really formless; but you are at present identifying yourself with the body. So long as you are formful why should you not worship the formless God as being formful?

The questioner was baffled and perplexed.

1st January, 1936

Talk 122.

A crowd had gathered here during Christmas.

D.: How to attain Unity Consciousness?

M.: Being Unity Consciousness how to attain it? Your question is its own answer.

D.: What is *Atman* (Self), *anatman* (non-self) and *paramatman* (Supreme Self)?

M.: Atman is *jivatman* (the individual Self) and the rest are plain. The Self is ever-present (*nityasiddha*). Each one wants to know the Self. What kind of help does one require to know oneself? People want to see the Self as something new. But it is eternal and remains the same all along. They desire to see it as a blazing light, etc. How can it be so? It is not light, not darkness (*na tejo, na tamah*). It is only as it is. It cannot be defined. The best definition is 'I am that I AM.' The *Srutis* speak of the Self as being the size of one's thumb, the tip of the hair, an electric spark, vast, subtler than the subtlest, etc. They have no foundation in fact. It is only Being, but different from the real and the unreal; it is Knowledge, but different from knowledge and ignorance. How can it be defined at all? It is simply Being.

Again Sri Bhagavan said that in the whole Thayumanavar literature, he preferred one stanza which says: "Ego disappearing another 'I-I' spontaneously manifests in full glory," etc. Again he cites *Skandar Anubhuti:* "Not real, nor unreal; not darkness nor light, it is."

One man said, that a *siddha* of Kumbakonam claimed to overcome the defects in Sri Sankara's system which deals only with transcendentalism and not the work-a-day life. One must be able to exercise super-human powers in ordinary life, that is to say, one must be a *siddha* in order to be perfect.

Sri Bhagavan pointed out a stanza in Thayumanavar which condemns all *siddhis*. Further he said that Thayumanavar mentions *mouna* (silence) in numerous places but defines it in only one

verse. *Mouna* is said to be that state which spontaneously manifests after the annihilation of the ego. That state is beyond light and darkness, but still it is called light since no other proper word could be found for it.

3rd January, 1936

Talk 123.

Dr. Mohammed Hafiz Syed, a Muslim Professor of Persian and Urdu in the University of Allahabad, asked: " What is the purpose of this external manifestation?"

M.: This manifestation had induced your question.

D.: True. I am covered by *maya*. How to be free from it?

M.: Who is covered by *maya*? Who wants to be free?

D.: Master, being asked 'Who?', I know that it is ignorant me, composed of the senses, mind and body. I tried this enquiry 'Who?' after reading Paul Brunton's book. Three or four times I was feeling elated and the elation lasted sometime and faded away. How to be established in 'I'? Please give me the clue and help me.

M.: That which appears anew must also disappear in due course.

D.: Please tell me the method of reaching the eternal Truth.

M.: You are *That*. Can you ever remain apart from the Self? To be yourself requires no effort since you are always That.

Talk 124.

Another impatient questioner elaborated long premises and finished asking why some children die a premature death. He required the answer not to satisfy the grown-up ones who look on, but the babies who are the victims.

M.: Let the victims ask. Why do you ask and desire the answer from the standpoint of the child?

Talk 125.

The Muslim Professor asked: When I am here my mind is *satvic*; as soon as I turn my back on this, my mind hankers after so many objects.

M.: Are the objects different from you? There can be no objects without the subject.

D.: And how shall I know it?

M.: Being That, what do you want to know? Are there two selves for the one to know the other?

D.: Again, I repeat, sir, how to know the truth of all this and experience the same?

M.: There is no gaining of anything new. All that is required is to rid the Self of ignorance. This ignorance is the identification of the Self with the non-Self.

D.: Yes. Still I do not understand. I must have your help. Everyone here is waiting on you for your Grace. You yourself must have sought originally the help of a Guru or of God. Extend that Grace to others now and save me.

Before I came here I desired to see you very much. But somehow I could not find an opportunity to do so. In Bangalore I made up my mind to return to my place. I met Mr. Frydman and others who sent me here. You have dragged me here. My case is like Paul Brunton's in Bombay, when he was dragged here having cancelled his passage home.

I hesitated at first on arrival. I wondered if I would be permitted to approach you and converse with you. My doubts were soon set at rest. I find that all are equal here. You have established an equality among all. I dined with you and others. If I should say so to my people in U.P., they would not believe it. The Brahmins would not drink water with me, nor chew *pan* with me. But here you have taken me and others like me in your fold. Though Gandhi is striving hard he cannot bring about such a state of affairs in the country. I am very happy in your presence.

I regard you as God. I consider Sri Krishna to be true God because He has said, "Whomsoever one may worship, the worshipper worships me only and I save him." Whereas all others have said, "Salvation is through me (meaning himself) only," Krishna alone is so broad-minded and has spoken like God. You observe the same kind of equality.

4th January, 1936

Talk 126.

Dr. Syed again asked: "Should anyone desirous of spiritual progress take to action or renunciation (*pravritti-marga* or *nivritti-marga*)?"

M.: Do you go out of the Self? What is meant by giving up?

An American Engineer asked about *sat-sanga* (association with sages).

M.: Sat is within us.

D.: In the book "*Who am I*?" you have said the Heart is the seat of the mind. Is it so?

M.: The mind is Atman.

D.: Is it Atman itself or its projection?

M.: The same.

D.: The Westerners look on the mind as the highest principle, whereas the Easterners think the contrary - why?

M.: Where psychology ends, there philosophy begins. This is experience; the mind is born; we see it; even without the mind we exist. There is everyone's experience to prove it.

D.: In deep sleep I do not seem to exist.

M.: You say so when awake. It is the mind which speaks now. You exist in deep sleep beyond mind.

D.: Western philosophy admits the Higher Self as influencing the mind.

Talk 127.

The American Engineer asked: "Does distance have any effect upon Grace?"

M.: Time and space are within us. You are always in your Self. How do time and space affect it?

D.: In radio those who are nearer hear sooner. You are Hindu, we are American. Does it make any difference?

M.: No.

D.: Even thoughts are read by others.

M.: That shows that all are one.

5th January, 1936

Talk 128.

There were some French ladies and gentlemen and American as visitors to the Asramam. They asked Sri Bhagavan several questions. Among them, one was: "What is the message of the East to the West?"

M.: All go to the same goal.

To another question Sri Bhagavan said: "How do you say 'I am'? Do you take a light to find yourself? Or did you come to know it on reading books? How?"

The questioner said: "By experience."

M.: Yes. Experience is the word. Knowledge implies subject and object. But experience is non-terminal, eternal.

6th January, 1936

Talk 129.

An elderly gentleman, formerly a co-worker with B. V. Narasimha Swami and author of some *Visishtadvaita* work, visited the place for the first time. He asked about rebirths, if it is possible for the *linga sarira* (subtle body) to get dissolved and be reborn in two years after death.

M.: Yes. Surely. Not only can one be reborn, one may be twenty or forty or even seventy years old in the new body though only two years after death. Sri Bhagavan cited Lila's story from *Yoga Vasishta*.

Sreyo hi jnanam abhyasat jnanat dhyanam,

dhyanat karmaphala tyagah.

Here *jnana* stands for knowledge without practice; *abhyasa* stands for practice without knowledge; *dhyana* stands for practice with knowledge.

"Knowledge without practice accompanying it is superior to practice without knowledge. Practice with knowledge is superior to knowledge without practice accompanying it. *Karmaphala tyagah Nishkama karma* as of a *jnani* - action without desire - is superior to knowledge with practice."

D.: What is the difference between *yoga* and surrender?

M.: Surrender is *Bhakti Yoga*. To reach the source of the 'I-thought' is the destruction of the ego, is the attainment of the goal, is *prapatti* (surrender), *jnana*, etc.

Talk 130.

Lakshman Brahmachari from Sri Ramakrishna Mission asked: Enquiry of 'Who am I?' or of the 'I-thought' being itself a thought, how can it be destroyed in the process?

M.: When Sita was asked who was her husband among the *rishis* (Rama himself being present there as a *rishi*) in the forest by the wives of the *rishis*, she denied each one as he was pointed out to her, but simply hung down her head when Rama was pointed out. Her silence was eloquent.

Similarly, the Vedas also are eloquent in '*neti*' - '*neti*' (not this - not this) and then remain silent. Their silence is the Real State. This is the meaning of exposition by silence. When the source of the 'I-thought' is reached it vanishes and what remains over is the Self.

D.: Patanjali Yoga Sutras speak of identification.

M.: Identification with the Supreme is only the other name for the destruction of the ego.

Talk 131.

Mr. Subba Rao asked: What is *mukhya prana* (the chief *prana*)?

M.: It is that from which the ego and the *prana* rise. It is sometimes called *Kundalini*. Consciousness is not born at any time, it remains eternal. But ego is born; so also the other thoughts. Associated with the absolute consciousness they shine forth; not otherwise.

D.: What is *moksha* (liberation)?

M.: Moksha is to know that you were not born. "*Be still and know that I am God*."

To be still is not to think. Know, and not *think*, is the word.

D.: There are said to be six organs of different colours in the chest, of which the heart is said to be two finger-breadths to the right of the

middle line. But the Heart is also formless. Should we then imagine it to have a shape and meditate on it?

M.: No. Only the quest "Who am I?" is necessary. What remains all through deep sleep and waking is the same. But in waking there is unhappiness and the effort to remove it. Asked who wakes up from sleep you say 'I'. Now you are told to hold fast to this 'I'. If it is done the eternal Being will reveal Itself. Investigation of 'I' is the point and not meditation on the heart-centre. There is nothing like within or without. Both mean either the same thing or nothing.

Of course there is also the practice of meditation on the heart-centre. It is only a practice and not investigation. Only the one who meditates on the heart can remain aware when the mind ceases to be active and remains still; whereas those who meditate on other centres cannot be so aware but infer that the mind was still only after it becomes again active.

Talk 132.

An educated man asked: Is there an Absolute Being? What is its relation to the relative existence?

M.: Are they different from each other? All the questions arise only in the mind. The mind arises with waking and subsides in deep sleep. As long as there is a mind, so long will there be such questions and doubts.

D.: There must be stage after stage of progress for gaining the Absolute. Are there grades of Reality?

M.: There are no grades of Reality. There are grades of experience for the *jiva* and not of Reality. If anything can be gained anew, it could also be lost, whereas the Absolute is central - here and now.

D.: If so, how do I remain ignorant of it (*avarana*)?

M.: For whom is this ignorance (veiling)? Does the Absolute tell you that it is veiled? It is the *jiva* who says that something veils the Absolute. Find out for whom this ignorance is.

D.: Why is there imperfection in Perfection? That is, how did the Absolute become relative?

M.: For whom is this relativity? For whom is this imperfection? The Absolute is not imperfect and cannot ask. The insentient cannot ask the question. Between the two something has risen up which raises these questions and which feels this doubt. Who is it? Is it the one who has now arisen? Or is it the one who is eternal?

Being perfect, why do you feel yourself imperfect? Such is the teaching of all the religions. Whatever may be the experiences, the experiencer is one and the same.

'I' is *purna* - perfection. There is no diversity in sleep. That indicates perfection.

D.: Being perfect, why do I not feel it?

M.: Nor is imperfection felt in deep sleep. The 'I' in sleep being perfect, why does the waking 'I' feel imperfect? Because the one who feels imperfect is a spurious offshoot, a differentiation from the Infinite - a segregation from God.

D.: I am the same in all the three states. Did this ego submerge me or did I entangle myself into it?

M.: Did anything come up without you?

D.: I am always the same.

M.: Because you see it, this appears to have come up. Did you feel this difficulty in deep sleep? What is new now?

D.: The senses and the mind.

M.: Who says this? Is it the sleeper? If so he should have raised the question in deep sleep also. The sleeper has been lost hold of, some spurious offshoot has differentiated himself and speaks now.

Can anything new appear without that which is eternal and perfect? This kind of dispute is itself eternal. Do not engage in it. Turn inward and put an end to all this. There will be no finality in disputations.

D.: Show me that Grace which puts an end to all this trouble. I have not come here to argue. I want only to learn.

M.: Learn first what you are. This requires no *sastras*, no scholarship. This is simple experience. The state of *being* is now and here all along. You have lost hold of yourself and are asking others for

guidance. The purpose of philosophy is to turn you inward. "If you know your Self, no evil can come to you. Since you asked me I have taught you."

The ego comes up only holding you (the Self). Hold yourself and the ego will vanish. Until then the sage will be saying, "There is." - The ignorant will be asking "Where?"

D.: The crux of the problem lies in "Know Thyself."

M.: Yes. Quite so.

Talk 133.

There are two schools in *Advaita*: (1) *Drishti srishti* (simultaneous creation) and (2) *Srishti drishti* (gradual creation).

There is the *Tantric Advaita* which admits three fundamentals *jagat, jiva, Isvara* - world, soul, God. These three are also real. But the reality does not end with them. It extends beyond. That is the *Tantric Advaita*. The Reality is limitless. The three fundamentals do not exist apart from the Absolute Reality. All agree that Reality is all-pervading; thus *Isvara* pervades the *jiva*; therefore the *jiva* has eternal being. His knowledge is not limited. Limited knowledge is only imagined by him. In truth, his is infinite knowledge. Its limit is Silence. This truth was revealed by *Dakshinamurti*. For those who still perceive these three fundamentals they are said to be realities. They are concomitant with the ego.

True, the images of gods are described in great detail. Such description points only to the final Reality. Otherwise why is the special significance of each detail also given? Think. The image is only a symbol. Only that which lies beyond name and form is Reality. *Saiva Siddhanta* and *Vedanta* have the common aim of the same Truth. Otherwise how could Sri Sankaracharya, the greatest exponent of *Advaita*, sing praises of gods? Obviously he did so knowingly.

The questioner earnestly explained that his faith in *Saiva Siddhanta, Vedanta*, etc., was shaken after reading Bahaic literature. "Please save me," he said.

M.: Know the Self which is here and now; you will be steady and not waver.

D.: The Bahaists read others' minds.

M.: Yes. That is possible. Your thoughts were read by another. There must be one to know your mind. That is the Truth always present which is to be realised. Truth does not waver.

D.: Show me Grace.

M.: Grace always *is*, and is *not given*. Why do you consider the pros and cons of Bahaullah or others being incarnations or otherwise? Know Thyself. Regard everything as Truth. Regard him also as the Truth. Can he exist besides Truth? Your beliefs may change but not Truth.

D.: Show me the truth of *Siddhanta*, etc.

M.: Follow their instructions and then if you have doubts you may ask. Adherence to those instructions will take you only to *mouna*. Differences are perceived in external objects only. If you follow their instructions all differences will be lost. No one but the son of a king can be called a prince; so also only That which is perfect is called Perfection.

One should not be content with mere discipleship, initiation, ceremony of surrender, etc.; these are external phenomena. Never forget the Truth underlying all phenomena.

D.: What is the significance of the Silence of *Dakshinamurti*?

M.: Many are the explanations given by scholars and sages. Have it any way you please.

14th January, 1936

Talk 134.

A question about the Heart was raised.

Sri Bhagavan said that one should seek the Self and realise it. The Heart will play its part automatically. The seat of realisation is the Heart. It cannot be said to be either in or out.

D.: Did Bhagavan feel the Heart as the point of Realisation in his first or early experience?

M.: I began to use the word after seeing literature on the subject. I correlated it with my experience.

15th January, 1936

Talk 135.

Three European ladies from the Theosophical Conference came here and asked: "Is the whole scheme, the Plan, really good? Or is it in the nature of an error, a mistake of which we have to make the best?"

M.: The Plan is indeed good. The error is on our part. When we correct it in ourselves the whole scheme becomes all right.

D.: Have you any formula to teach us how to bring it about through a remembrance of what we do during sleep?

M.: No formula is needed. Everyone has the experience that he slept happily and knew nothing then. Nothing else was experienced.

D.: The answer does not satisfy me. We wander in the astral plane in our sleep but we do not remember it.

M.: The astral plane is concerned with dreams, not with deep sleep.

D.: What do you consider to be the cause of world suffering? And how can we help to change it, (*a*) as individuals? or (*b*) collectively?

M.: Realise the Real Self. It is all that is necessary.

D.: Can we hasten our illumination for greater service? and how?

M.: As we are not able to help ourselves, so we have to surrender ourselves to the Supreme completely. Then He will take care of us as well as the world.

D.: What do you consider the goal?

M.: Self-Realisation.

D.: Is there any way to meet the appointed Guru for each?

M.: Intense meditation brings it about.

Talk 136.

Dr. G. H. Mees, a young Dutchman, was here for a few days. He asked Sri Bhagavan: "I have an impression that in deep sleep I have something akin to *samadhi*. Is it so?"

M.: It is the waking 'I' that asks the questions - not the 'I' in sleep. If you attain the state of wakeful sleep which is the same as *samadhi*, while still awake, doubts will not arise.

Samadhi is one's natural state. It is the under-current in all the three states. This - that is, 'I' - is not in those states, but these states are in It. If we get *samadhi* in our waking state that will persist in deep sleep also. The distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness belongs to the realm of mind, which is transcended by the state of the Real Self.

D.: Is the Buddhist view, that there is no continuous entity answering to the ideas of the individual soul, correct or not? Is this consistent with the Hindu notion of a reincarnating ego? Is the soul a continuous entity which reincarnates again and again, according to the Hindu doctrine, or is it a mere mass of mental tendencies - *samskaras*?

M.: The Real Self is continuous and unaffected. The reincarnating ego belongs to the lower plane, namely, thought. It is transcended by Self-Realisation.

Reincarnations are due to a spurious offshoot. Therefore it is denied by the Buddhists. The present state is due to a mixing up of the *chit* (sentient) with *jada* (insentient).

Talk 137.

Lakshman Brahmachari of Sri Ramakrishna Mission asked: "Can one imagine oneself as witness of the thoughts?"

M.: It is not the natural state. It is only an idea (*bhavana*) - an aid to stilling the mind. The Self is ever the witness, whether so imagined or not. There is no need to so imagine except for that purpose. But it is best to remain as one's Self.

Talk 138.

The Financial Secretary of Mysore asked: "Is Paul Brunton's *Secret Path* useful for Indians as well?"

M.: Yes - for all.

D.: The body, the senses, etc. are not 'I'. This is common amongst us. But how to practise it?

M.: By the threefold method mentioned therein.

D.: Is breath-control necessary for enquiry?

M.: Not quite.

D.: "There is a blankness intervening," it is said in the book.

M.: Yes. Do not stop there. See for whom the blankness appears.

D.: For devotees there is no blankness, it is said.

M.: Even there, there is the latent state, *laya*; the mind wakes up after some time.

D.: What is the experience of *samadhi*?

M.: It is as it is. For onlookers it may seem to be a swoon. Even to the practiser it may appear so in the early experiences. After a few repeated experiences it will be all right.

D.: Do they soothe *nadis* or do they excite them by such experiences?

M.: They are excited at first. By continued experience it becomes common and the man is no longer excited.

D.: Proceeding on safe lines there should be no unpleasantness. Excitement is uncongenial to smooth being and working.

M.: A wandering mind is on the wrong way; only a devotional mind is on the right way.

19th January, 1936

Talk 139.

Mr. Ellappa Chettiar, a Member of the Legislative Council, from Salem, asked: "Is it enough to introvert the mind or should we meditate on 'I am Brahman'?"

M.: To introvert the mind is the prime thing. The Buddhists consider the flow of 'I' thought to be Liberation; whereas we say that such flow proceeds from its underlying substratum - the only - Reality.

Why should one be meditating 'I am Brahman'? Only the annihilation of 'I' is Liberation. But it can be gained only by keeping the 'I-I' always in view. So the need for the investigation of the 'I' thought. If the 'I' is not let go, no blank can result to the seeker. Otherwise meditation will end in sleep.

There is only one 'I' all along, but what arises up from time to time is the mistaken 'I-thought'; whereas the intuitive 'I' always remains Self-shining, *i.e.*, even before it becomes manifest.

The birth of the gross body does not amount to one's own birth, on the other hand, the birth of the ego is one's own birth.

For liberation, nothing new remains to be gained. It is the original state and continues unchanged too.

Talk 140.

D.: What is reality?

M.: Reality must be always real. It is not with forms and names. That which underlies these is the Reality. It underlies limitations, being itself limitless. It is not bound. It underlies unrealities, itself being real. Reality is that which is. It is as it is. It transcends speech, beyond the expressions, *e.g.*, existence, non-existence, etc.

Talk 141.

The same gentleman later, after quoting a verse from *Kaivalya*, asked: "Can *jnana* be lost after being once attained?"

M.: Jnana, once revealed, takes time to steady itself. The Self is certainly within the direct experience of everyone, but not as one imagines it to be. It is only as it is. This Experience is *samadhi*. Just as fire remains without scorching against incantations or other devices but scorches otherwise, so also the Self remains veiled by *vasanas* and reveals itself when there are no *vasanas*. Owing to the fluctuation of the *vasanas, jnana* takes time to steady itself. Unsteady *jnana* is not enough to check rebirths. *Jnana* cannot remain unshaken side by side with *vasanas*. True, that in the proximity of a great master, the *vasanas* will cease to be active, the mind becomes still and *samadhi* results, similar to fire not scorching because of other devices. Thus the disciple gains true knowledge and right experience in the presence of the master. To remain unshaken in it further efforts are necessary. He will know it to be his real Being and thus be liberated even while alive. *Samadhi* with closed eyes is certainly good, but one must go further until it is realised that actionlessness and action are not hostile to each other. Fear of loss of *samadhi* while one is active is the sign of ignorance. *Samadhi* must be the natural life of everyone.

There is a state beyond our efforts or effortlessness. Until it is realised effort is necessary. After tasting such Bliss, even once one

will repeatedly try to regain it. Having once experienced the Bliss of Peace no one would like to be out of it or engaged himself otherwise. It is as difficult for a *jnani* to engage in thoughts as it is for an *ajnani* to be free from thought.

The common man says that he does not know himself; he thinks many thoughts and cannot remain without thinking.

Any kind of activity does not affect a *jnani*; his mind remains ever in eternal Peace.

20th January, 1936

Talk 142.

Mr. Prakasa Rao from Bezwada: Does not illusion become inoperative even before identity with Brahman results (*Brahmakaravritti*)? Or does it persist even afterwards?

M.: Illusion will not persist after *vasanas* are annihilated. In the interval between the knowledge of the identity and annihilation of *vasanas*, there will be illusion.

D.: How can the world influence a man even after identity with Brahman?

M.: First do it and see. You can then raise this question, if necessary.

D.: Can we know it in the same way as we know our identity?

M.: Are you different from the mind? How do you expect it to be known?

D.: Can the full scope of the *Chitta* (*Chittavilasa*) be known?

M.: Oh! Is this the identity of Brahman?

Ignorance vanishing, the residue reveals itself. It is experience, not in the category of knowledge.

23rd January, 1936

Talk 143.

Mr. P. Brunton asked Sri Bhagavan if the Hill here is hollow.

M.: The *puranas* say so. When it is said that the Heart is a cavity, penetration into it proves it to be an expanse of light. Similarly the Hill is one of light. The caves, etc., are covered up by the Light.

D.: Are there caves inside?

M.: In visions I have seen caves, cities with streets, etc., and a whole world in it.

D.: Are there *Siddhas* too in it?

M.: All the *Siddhas* are reputed to be there.

D.: Are there only *Siddhas* or others also?

M.: Just like this world.

D.: Siddhas are said to be in the Himalayas.

M.: Kailas is on the Himalayas: it is the abode of Siva. Whereas this Hill is Siva Himself. All the paraphernalia of His abode must also be where He Himself is.

D.: Does Bhagavan believe that the Hill is hollow, etc.?

M.: Everything depends on the viewpoint of the individual. You yourself have seen hermitages, etc., on this Hill in a vision. You have described such in your book.

D.: Yes. It was on the surface of the Hill. The vision was within me.

M.: That is exactly so. Everything is within one's Self. To see the world, there must be a spectator. There could be no world without the Self. The Self is all-comprising. In fact Self is all. There is nothing besides the Self.

D.: What is the mystery of this Hill?

M.: Just as you have said in *Secret Egypt*, "The mystery of the pyramid is the mystery of the Self," so also the mystery of this Hill is the mystery of the Self.

Maj. Chadwick: I do not know if the Self is different from the ego.

M.: How were you in your deep sleep?

D.: I do not know.

M.: Who does not know? Is it not the waking Self? Do you deny your existence in your deep sleep?

D.: I was and I am; but I do not know who was in deep sleep.

M.: Exactly. The man awake says that he did not know anything in the state of sleep. Now he sees the objects and knows that he is there; whereas in deep sleep there were no objects, no spectator, etc.

The same one who is now speaking was in deep sleep also. What is the difference between these two states? There are objects and play of senses now which were not in sleep. A new entity, the ego, has risen up in the meantime, it plays through the senses, sees the objects, confounds itself with the body and says that the Self is the ego. In reality, what was in deep sleep continues to exist now too. The Self is changeless. It is the ego that has come between. That which rises and sets is the ego; that which remains changeless is the Self.

Talk 144.

Mr. Prakasa Rao: What is the root-cause of *maya*?

M.: What is *maya*?

D.: Maya is wrong knowledge, illusion.

M.: For whom is the illusion? There must be one to be deluded. Illusion is ignorance. The ignorant Self sees the objects according to you. When the objects are not themselves present how can *maya* exist? *Maya is ya ma* (*maya is what is not*). What remains over is the true Self. If you say that you see the objects, or if you say that you do not know the Real Unity, then are there two selves, one the knower and the other the knowable object. No one will admit of two selves in himself. The awakened man says that he himself was in deep slumber but not aware. He does not say that the sleeper was different from the present one. There is only one Self. That Self is always aware. It is changeless. There is nothing but the Self.

D.: What is the astral body?

M.: Do you not have a body in your dream? Is it not different from the recumbent body on the bed?

D.: Do we survive after death? Does the astral body outlive physical death?

M.: Just as in dreams you wake up after several novel experiences, so also after physical death another body is found and so on.

D.: They say that the astral body lives for forty years after death.

M.: In the present body you say the dream body is astral. Did you say so in the dream body? What is astral now would appear real then, the present body itself is astral according to that viewpoint. What is

the difference between one astral body and another? There is no difference between the two.

Mr. P. Brunton: There are degrees of reality.

M.: To say the dream body is unreal now, and to say that this body was unreal in the dream, does not denote degrees of reality. In deep sleep there is no experience of the body at all. There is always only one and that is the Self.

Talk 145.

Mr. P. Brunton: Why do religions speak of Gods, heaven, hell, etc.?

M.: Only to make the people realise that they are on a par with this world and that the Self alone is real. The religions are according to the view-point of the seeker. Take the *Bhagavad Gita* for instance: When Arjuna said that he would not fight against his own relatives, his elders, etc., in order to kill them and gain the kingdom, Sri Krishna said, "Not that these, you or I, were not before, are not now, nor will not be hereafter. Nothing was born, nothing was dead, nor will it not be so hereafter" and so on. Later as he developed the theme and declared that He had given the same instruction to the Sun, through him to Ikshvaku, etc. Arjuna raised the doubt, "How could it be? You were born a few years ago. They lived ages ago." Then Sri Krishna understanding Arjuna's standpoint, said: "Yes. There have been so many incarnations of myself and yourself, I know them all but you do not know."

Such statements appear contradictory, but still they are correct according to the viewpoint of the questioner. The Christ also declared that He was even before Abraham.

D.: What is the purpose of such descriptions in religions?

M.: Only to establish the Reality of the Self.

D.: Bhagavan always speaks from the highest standpoint.

Sri Bhagavan (with a smile): People would not understand the simple and bare truth - the truth of their every day, ever-present and eternal experience. That Truth is that of the Self. Is there anyone not aware of the Self? They would not even like to hear it (the Self), whereas they are eager to know what lies beyond - heaven, hell,

reincarnation. Because they love mystery and not the bare truth, religions pamper them - only to bring them round to the Self. Wandering hither and thither you must return to the Self only. Then, why not abide in the Self even here and now?

The other worlds require the Self as a spectator or speculator. Their reality is only of the same degrees as that of the spectator or thinker. They cannot exist without the spectator, etc. Therefore they are not different from the Self. Even the ignorant man sees only the Self when he sees objects. But he is confused and identifies the Self with the object, *i.e.*, the body and with the senses and plays in the world. Subject and object - all merge in the Self. There is no seer nor objects seen. The seer and the seen are the Self. There are not many selves either. All are only one Self.

26th January, 1936

Talk 146.

In reply to Miss Leena Sarabhai, a cultured Indian lady of high rank, Sri Bhagavan said: The state of equanimity is the state of bliss. The declaration in the Vedas ‘I am This or That’, is only an aid to gain equanimity of mind.

D.: So, it is wrong to begin with a goal: is it?

M.: If there be a goal to be reached it cannot be permanent. The goal must already be there. We seek to reach the goal with the ego, but the goal exists before the ego. What is in the goal is even prior to our birth, *i.e.*, to the birth of the ego. Because we exist the ego appears to exist too.

If we look on the Self as the ego then we become the ego, if as the mind we become the mind, if as the body we become the body. It is the thought which builds up sheaths in so many ways. The shadow on the water is found to be shaking. Can anyone stop the shaking of the shadow? If it should cease to shake you would not notice the water but only the light. Similarly to take no notice of the ego and its activities, but see only the light behind. The ego is the I-thought. The true ‘I’ is the Self.

D.: It is one step to realisation.

M.: Realisation is already there. The state free from thoughts is the only real state. There is no such action as Realisation. Is there anyone who is not realising the Self? Does anyone deny his own existence? Speaking of realisation, it implies two selves - the one to realise, the other to be realised. What is not already realised, is sought to be realised. Once we admit our existence, how is it that we do not know our Self?

D.: Because of the thoughts - the mind.

M.: Quite so. It is the mind that stands between and veils our happiness. How do we know that we exist? If you say because of the world around us, then how do you know that you existed in deep sleep?

D.: How to get rid of the mind?

M.: Is it the mind that wants to kill itself? The mind cannot kill itself. So your business is to find the real nature of the mind. Then you will know that there is no mind. When the Self is sought, the mind is nowhere. Abiding in the Self, one need not worry about the mind.

D.: How to get rid of fear?

M.: What is fear? It is only a thought. If there is anything besides the Self there is reason to fear. Who sees the second (anything external)? First the ego arises and sees objects as external. If the ego does not rise, the Self alone exists and there is no second (nothing external). For anything external to oneself implies the seer within. Seeking it there will arise no doubt, no fear - not only fear, all other thoughts centred round the ego will disappear along with it.

D.: This method seems to be quicker than the usual one of cultivating qualities alleged necessary for salvation (*sadhana chatushtaya*)?

M.: Yes. All bad qualities centre round the ego. When the ego is gone Realisation results by itself. There are neither good nor bad qualities in the Self. The Self is free from all qualities. Qualities pertain to the mind only. It is beyond quality. If there is unity, there will also be duality. The numeral one gives rise to other numbers. The truth is neither one nor two. IT is as it is.

D.: The difficulty is to be in the thought-free state.

M.: Leave the thought-free state to itself. Do not think of it as pertaining to you. Just as when you walk, you involuntarily take steps, so too in your actions; but the thought-free state is not affected by your actions.

D.: What is it that is discriminative in action?

M.: Discrimination will be automatic, intuitive.

D.: So Intuition alone matters; Intuition develops also.

M.: Those who have discovered great Truths have done so in the still depths of the Self.

The ego is like one's shadow thrown on the ground. If one attempts to bury it, it will be foolish. The Self is only one. If limited it is the ego. If unlimited it is Infinite and is the Reality.

The bubbles are different from one another and numerous, but the ocean is only one. Similarly the egos are many, whereas the Self is one and only one.

When told that you are not the ego, realise the Reality. Why do you still identify yourself with the ego? It is like saying, "Don't think of the monkey while taking medicine" - it is impossible. Similarly it happens with common folk. When the Reality is mentioned why do you continue to meditate *Sivoham* or *Aham Brahmasmi*? The significance must be traced and understood. It is not enough to repeat the bare words or think of them.

Reality is simply the loss of the ego. Destroy the ego by seeking its identity. Because the ego is no entity it will automatically vanish and Reality will shine forth by itself. This is the direct method. Whereas all other methods are done, only retaining the ego. In those paths there arise so many doubts and the eternal question remains to be tackled finally. But in this method the final question is the only one and it is raised from the very beginning. No *sadhanas* are necessary for engaging in this quest.

There is no greater mystery than this - *viz.*, ourselves being the Reality we seek to gain reality. We think that there is something hiding our Reality and that it must be destroyed before the Reality is gained. It is ridiculous. A day will dawn when you will yourself laugh at your past efforts. That which will be on the day you laugh is also here and now.

D.: So it is a great game of pretending?

M.: Yes.

In *Yoga Vasishtha* it is said, "What is Real is hidden from us, but what is false, is revealed as true." We are actually experiencing the Reality only; still, we do not know it. Is it not a wonder of wonders?

The quest "Who am I?" is the axe with which to cut off the ego.

Talk 147.

In answer to a Canarese Sanyasi, Sri Bhagavan said: There are different grades of mind. Realisation is of Perfection. It cannot be comprehended by the mind. *Sarvajnatva* (the state of all-knowing) is to be *sarvam* (the all); 'the all' pertains only to the mind. The known and unknown together form 'the all'. After transcending the mind you remain as the Self. The present knowledge is only of limitation. That Knowledge is unlimited. Being so it cannot be comprehended by this knowledge. Cease to be a knower, then there is perfection.

27th January, 1936

Talk 148.

A Gujerati gentleman said that he was concentrating on sound - *nada* - and desired to know if the method was right.

M.: Meditation on *nada* is one of the several approved methods. The adherents claim a very special virtue for the method. According to them it is the easiest and the most direct method. Just as a child is lulled to sleep by lullabies, so *nada* soothes one to the state of *samadhi*; again just as a king sends his state musicians to welcome his son on his return from a long journey, so also *nada* takes the devotee into the Lord's Abode in a pleasing manner. *Nada* helps concentration. After it is felt the practice should not be made an end in itself. *Nada* is not the objective; the subject should firmly be held; otherwise a blank will result. Though the subject is there even in the blank he would not be aware of the cessation of *nada* of different kinds. In order to be aware even in that blank one must remember his own self. *Nada upasana* (meditation on sound) is good; it is better if associated

with investigation (*vichara*). In that case the *nada* is made up of *chinmaya* and also *tanmaya* (of Knowledge and of Self). *Nada* helps concentration.

28th January, 1936

Talk 149.

In reply to a *sadhu* who asked if *bhakti* consisted in forgetting the body, etc. Sri Bhagavan said:

"What do you care for the body? Practise *bhakti* and don't worry about what happens to the body."

Talk 150.

Mrs. and Mr. Kelly, an elderly couple from America, and others of their company desired to know what they should do to gain concentration in face of discomforts of sitting and the sting of mosquitoes, etc.

M.: The discomforts will not worry you if your concentration is right. Do not mind the discomforts. Keep your mind steady in meditation. If you have not the strength and endurance to bear mosquito stings how do you hope to gain realisation of the Self? Realisation must be amidst all the turmoils of life. If you make yourself comfortable and go to bed you fall asleep. Face the troubles but keep yourself steady in meditation.

31st January, 1936

Talk 151.

The American gentleman is a little hard of hearing. Being accustomed to be self-reliant from his youth he naturally feels worried on account of his hearing becoming defective.

M.: You were not self-reliant; you were ego-reliant. It is good that ego-reliance is banished and that you become truly Self-reliant.

Again Bhagavan said:

"There is no cause for worry. Subjugation of senses is a necessary preliminary for Self-Realisation. One sense is subdued for you by God Himself. So much the better."

The questioner said that he appreciated the humour, but that still his self-respect suffered.

M.: The Self is only one. Do you feel hurt if you blame yourself or scorn yourself for your errors? If you hold the Self there is no second person to scorn you. When you see the world you have lost hold of the Self. On the contrary, hold the Self and the world will not appear.

1st February, 1936

Talk 152.

Mrs. Kelly desired to know how she should best learn to meditate.
Sri Bhagavan asked if she had made *japa* (rolling beads as Roman Catholics do). She said: "No".

M.: Have you thought of God, His qualities, etc.?

D.: I have read, talked, etc. about such themes.

M.: Well, if the same be revolved in the mind without open expression through the senses it is meditation.

D.: I mean meditation as signified in *The Secret Path* and *Who am I*?

M.: Long for it intensely so that the mind melts in devotion. After the camphor burns away no residue is left. The mind is the camphor; when it has resolved itself into the Self without leaving even the slightest trace behind, it is Realisation of the Self.

4th February, 1936

Talk 153.

Some Peshawaris, among them a Judicial Commissioner and a young man well-read and earnest, with a strong belief in the existence of *Paramatman* (Supreme Self) as different from the *Jivatman* (individual self), raised some questions.

Sri Bhagavan clinched his various doubts by this one statement: Remove the *upadhis* (adjuncts), *jiva* and *parama*, from the Atman and say if you still find the difference. If later these doubts still persist ask yourself, "Who is the doubter? Who is the thinker?" Find him. These doubts will vanish.

5th February, 1936

Talk 154.

The next day he asked about *pranayama*.

M.: Pranayama according to *jnana* is:

"Na aham" I am not this = out-breathing

"Koham" Who am I? = in-breathing

"Soham" I am He = Retention of breath

This is *vichara*. This *vichara* brings about the desired result.

For one not so advanced as to engage in it, some meditation brings about suspension of breath and the mind ceases to be restless. Control of mind spontaneously effects control of breath; rather *kevala kumbhaka* (spontaneous retention of breath, without attention to inhalation or exhalation) results.

For one unable to do this also, regulation of breath is prescribed for making the mind quiescent. Quiescence lasts only so long as the breath is controlled. So it is transient. The goal is clearly not *pranayama*. It extends on to *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Those stages deal with the control of mind. Such control becomes easier for the man who had earlier practised *pranayama*. *Pranayama* leads him to the higher stages involving control of mind. Therefore control of mind is the aim of yoga also.

A more advanced man will naturally go direct to control of mind without wasting his time in practising control of breath. A simple development of *pranayama* alone may confer *siddhis* which so many hanker for.

When asked if there are any food restrictions, Sri Bhagavan said: "*Mita hita bhuk*" - agreeable food in moderate quantity. When asked about the efficacy of *bhakti*, Sri Bhagavan said: So long as there is *vibhakti*, there must be *bhakti*. So long as there is *viyoga*, there must be *yoga*. So long as there is duality, there must be God and devotee. Similarly also in *vichara*. So long as there is *vichara*, there is duality too. But merging into the Source there is unity only. So it is with *bhakti* too. Realising the God of devotion, there will be unity only. God too is thought of in and by the Self. So God is identical with the Self. If one is

told to have *bhakti* for God and he does so straightaway, it is all right. But there is another kind of man who turns round and says: "There are two, I and God. Before knowing the far-off God, let me know the more immediate and intimate 'I'." For him the *vichara-marga* has to be taught. There is in fact no difference between *bhakti* and *vichara*.

Talk 155.

The same man again asked about the nature of *samadhi* and the means to get *samadhi*.

M.: When the one who asks the nature of *samadhi* and the method of getting into it vanishes, *samadhi* will result.

Maj. Chadwick: It is said that one look of a Mahatma is enough; that idols, pilgrimages, etc. are not so effective. I have been here for three months, but I do not know how I have been benefited by the look of Maharshi.

M.: The look has a purifying effect. Purification cannot be visualised. Just as a piece of coal takes long to be ignited, a piece of charcoal takes a short time, and a mass of gunpowder is instantaneously ignited, so it is with grades of men coming in contact with Mahatmas.

Mr. Cohen: I get into meditation and reach a point which may be called peace and a contemplative mood. What should be the next step?

M.: Peace is Self-Realisation. Peace need not be disturbed. One should aim at Peace only.

D.: But I do not have the satisfaction.

M.: Because your peace is temporary. If made permanent it is called Realisation.

9th February, 1936

Talk 156.

D.: Is solitude helpful for practice?

M.: What do you mean by solitude?

D.: To keep away from others.

M.: Why should it be done? It is actuated only by fear. Even in solitude there is the fear of intrusion by others and of solitude

being spoilt. Moreover, how are thoughts to be erased in solitude? Should it not be done in the present environment?

D.: But the mind is distracted now.

M.: Why do you let go the mind? Solitude amounts to making the mind still. This can be done in a crowd too. Solitude cannot efface one's thoughts. Practice does it. The same practice can be made here too.

Talk 157.

D.: In the quest of I, the seeker is at a certain stage directed to keep the mind in a negative attitude for Grace to enter. How can a negative yield positive result?

M.: The Self is always there - not to be newly got.

D.: I mean to ask, what has been done in the negative attitude to deserve the Grace?

M.: Are you asking this question without Grace? Grace is in the beginning, middle and end. Grace is the Self. Because of the false identification of the Self with the body the Guru is considered to be with body. But from the Guru's outlook the Guru is only the Self. The Self is one only. He tells that the Self alone is. Is not then the Self your Guru? Where else will Grace come from? It is from the Self alone. Manifestation of the Self is a manifestation of Grace and vice versa. All these doubts arise because of the wrong outlook and consequent expectation of things external to oneself. Nothing is external to the Self.

D.: All our questions are from our standpoint and Sri Bhagavan's replies are from his standpoint. The questions are not only answered, but are also undermined.

11th February, 1936

Talk 158.

Mr. Frydman: Janaka was a *jnani* and still he ruled his dominions. Does not action require activity of the mind? What is the rationale of the working of a *jnani's* mind?

M.: You say, "Janaka was a *jnani* and yet active, etc." Does Janaka ask the question? The question is in your mind only. The *jnani* is not aware of anything besides the Self. He has no doubts of the kind.

D.: Probably it is like a dream. Just as we speak of our dreams, so they think of their actions.

M.: Even the dream, etc. is in your mind. This explanation too is in your mind only.

D.: Yes. I see. All is *Ramana-Maya* - made up of the Self.

M.: If so, there will be no duality and no talk.

D.: A man, on realising the Self, can help the world more effectively. Is it not so?

M.: If the world be apart from the Self.

12th February, 1936

Talk 159.

Mr. Cohen desired to know if trance is a *sine qua non* for Self-Realisation.

M.: You are always in the Self - now, in trance, in deep sleep, in Realisation. If you lose hold of the Self and identify yourself with the body or the mind, these states appear to overtake you, and it also looks like a blank in trance, etc.; whereas you are the Self and ever-present.

D.: Sri Aurobindo says that the Light which resides in the head must be brought down to the heart below.

M.: Is not the Self already in the Heart? How can the all-pervading Self be taken from one place to another?

D.: Is a karma yogi or a *bhakta* too subject to trance?

M.: When you concentrate on one point you merge in it, and this merging is called trance. The other features disappear and the Self alone remains over. The *karmi* or *bhakta* also must experience the same.

Talk 160.

D.: What is the *hridaya* and what the *sphurana* therein? How do they appear?

M.: The *hridaya* and the *sphurana* are the same as the Self. The *sphurana* requires a basis for its manifestation. This is explained in the book *Vichara Sangraham* (*Self-Enquiry*).

D.: How does the *sphurana* appear - as light, movement, or what?

M.: How can it be described in words? It includes all these - It is the Self. Fix your attention on it and do not let go the idea of its ultimate character.

13th February, 1936

Talk 161.

An elderly man from Ananthapur, after hearing the *Vedas* recited in the hall, stood up and asked:

"It is said that the non-Brahmins should not hear the recital of the Vedas."

M.: Mind your business. Take care of what you came here for. Why do you waste your time in these matters? "I heard the recital," you say. "Who is that 'I'? Without knowing the 'I' you are using the word. If its significance be known there will be no doubt. Find the 'I' first and you may afterwards speak of other matters."

Continuing, Sri Bhagavan said:

"The *smritis* say something. They are not appropriate now. I will reform the world, rewrite the *smritis*." Saying so, people are cutting capers in the world from time immemorial. Such reformers have come and gone; but the ancient *smritis* still stand. Why waste time over such matters? Let each one mind his business. All will be well.

23rd February, 1936

Talk 162.

A Maharashtra lady of middle-age, who had studied *Jnaneswari*, *Bhagavata* and *Vichara Sagara*, and was practising concentration between the eyebrows, had felt shivering and fear, and did not progress. She required guidance.

Maharshi told her not to forget the seer. The sight is fixed between the eyebrows, but the seer is not kept in view. If the seer be always remembered it will be all right.

24th February, 1936

Talk 163.

Dr. Henry Hand, an American of about seventy, asked "What is ego?"

M.: Ego being internal and not external to you it must be clear to yourself.

D.: What is its definition?

M.: The definition also must proceed from the ego. The ego must define itself.

D.: What is soul?

M.: Find the ego, the soul is found.

D.: Are they then the same?

M.: Soul can be without the ego; but the ego cannot be without the soul. They are like bubble and the ocean.

D.: That clarifies the matter. What is *Atman*?

M.: Atman and soul are the same.

Talk 164.

Another American asked about thought-forms.

M.: Trace the source of thoughts, they will disappear.

D.: Thoughts materialise.

M.: If there be thoughts they will materialise. If they disappear there is nothing to materialise. Moreover if you are physical the world is physical and so on. Find out if you are physical.

D.: How shall I be useful to God's world?

M.: Find out if 'I' is different from the divine part of the world. Not being able to help yourself yet you are seeking the divine part of it to help you to help the world. The divinity is directing and controlling you. Where do you go in deep sleep? Wherefrom do you come out?

D.: I have been influenced by deeds and thoughts.

M.: Thoughts and deeds are the same.

D.: Is there any way of sensing super-physical phenomena, *e.g.*, guardian angels?

M.: The state of the object is according to the state of the seer.

D.: A group of seers see the same.

M.: Because there is only one seer behind all, and there is diversity of phenomena. Do you perceive diversity in deep sleep?

D.: We see Abraham Lincoln who died long ago.

M.: Is there the object without the seer? The experiences may be real. The objects are only according to the seer.

D.: An assistant of mine was killed in the war. A photo was taken of another group nine years after his death. His picture appears in the photo. How is it?

M.: Possibly thoughts have materialised ... Go to the root of it.

D.: How?

M.: If the way is external, directions are possible, but it lies within. Seek within. The Self is always realised. Something not already realised might be sought afresh. But the Self is within your experience.

D.: Yes. I realise myself.

M.: Myself. Are there two - *my* and *self*?

D.: I do not mean it.

M.: Who is it that has or has not realised?

D.: There is only one Self.

M.: The question can arise only if there be two. Abandon the wrong identification of the Self with the non-self.

D.: I mean the higher stage of consciousness.

M.: There are no stages.

D.: Why does not a man get illumination instantly.

M.: The man is illumination itself. He is illumining

D.: Is your teaching different from that of others?

M.: The path is one and the realisation is only one.

D.: But people speak of so many methods.

M.: Depending on their own state of mentality.

D.: What is yoga?

M.: Yoga (union) is for one in viyoga (separation). But there is only one. If you realise the Self there will be no difference.

D.: Is there efficacy in bathing in the Ganges?

M.: The Ganges is within you. This Ganges does not make you feel cold or shiver. Bathe in it.

D.: Should we read Gita once in a while?

M.: Always.

D.: May we read the Bible?

M.: The Bible and the Gita are the same.

D.: The Bible teaches that Man is born in sin.

M.: The Man is sin. There was no man-sense in deep sleep. The body-thought brings out the idea of sin. The birth of thought is itself sin.

To another question the Master said: Everyone sees only the Self. The divine forms are only like bubbles in the ocean of Reality, or like pictures moving on a screen.

D.: The Bible says that the human soul may be lost.

M.: The 'I-thought' is the ego and that is lost. The real 'I' is "I am That I Am."

D.: There is conflict in the teachings of Aurobindo and of the Mother.

M.: First surrender the Self and then harmonise the conflicts.

D.: What is Renunciation?

M.: Giving up of the ego.

D.: Is it not giving up possessions?

M.: The possessor too.

D.: The world will change if the people will give up their possessions for the benefit of others.

M.: First give yourself up and then think of the rest.

In answer to another question Sri Bhagavan said:

The methods appear easy according to the nature of the individual. It depends on what he has practised before.

D.: Can we not get realisation instantaneously?

M.: Realisation is nothing new. It is eternal. There is no question of instantaneous or gradual realisation.

D.: Is there reincarnation?

M.: Reincarnation can be if you are incarnate now. Even now you are not born.

To another question:

M.: The ego is the root of all diseases. Give it up.

There will be no disease.

D.: If all renounce will there be a practical world? Who will plough? Who will harvest?

M.: Realise first and then see. The help through Realisation transcends all the help through words, thoughts and deeds, etc. If you understand your own reality then that of the *rishis* and masters will be clear to you. There is only one master and that is the Self.

D.: Why do masters insist on silence and receptivity?

M.: What is silence? It is eternal eloquence.

D.: What is receptive attitude of mind?

M.: Not to be distracted in mind.

D.: Is there use in bringing America and India closer by bringing the intelligentsia of the two countries together, say, by exchange of professors, etc.?

M.: Such events will take place automatically. There is a Power guiding the destinies of nations. These questions arise only when you have lost touch with Reality. Is America apart from you, or India apart? Get hold of it and see.

D.: Sri Ramakrishna prepared Vivekananda. What is the power behind?

M.: The power is only one in all.

D.: What is the nature of that force?

M.: Just like iron filings drawn towards a magnet, the force is inside and not outside. Ramakrishna was in Vivekananda. If you think Vivekananda to be a body, Ramakrishna also is a body. But they are not bodies. Vivekananda could not go into Samadhi had not Ramakrishna been within him.

D.: Why should one suffer when stung by a scorpion?

M.: What is the cause of the appearance of the body and of the world?

D.: It is part of the cosmic mind.

M.: Let the cosmic mind worry about such happenings. If the individual wants to know let him discover his Self.

D.: About yogic mysteries of drinking nitric acid, swallowing poisons, walking on fire, etc., are these due to a state of vibration?

M.: Let the physical body question it. You are not physical. Why worry about what you are not. If the Self had any form it might be affected by objects. But the Self has no form, therefore it is immune from contact with things.

D.: What is the significance of the sea of Love?

M.: Spirit, Holy Ghost, Realisation, Love, etc., are all synonymous.

D.: Very, very illuminating conversation.

Mr. N. Subba Rao: What is *visishtadvaita*?

M.: The same as this.

D.: They do not admit *maya*?

M.: Sarvam is Brahman, we say. They repeat Brahman remains qualified (*visishta*) in all.

D.: They say that the world is a reality.

M.: We say so too. Acharya has only said, "Find out the reality behind the world." What is called illusion by one is called changefulness by another. The end is the same in both.

Dr. Hand: Maharshi! Do not think we are bad boys.

M.: Do not tell me so. But you need not think you are bad boys.

All laughed and dispersed at 5 p.m.

Sri Bhagavan a minute later: If they remain a day longer they will become silent.

Talk 165.

Mr. Subba Rao: Do not men go into *samadhi*?

M.: Is there no *samadhi* now?

D.: Is it eternal?

M.: If not, how can it be real?

D.: Then?

M.: There is no *then*, no *now*.

D.: It appears so.

M.: To whom?

D.: To the mind.

M.: What is mind? Who am I?

D.: (Silence).

Talk 166.

A man asked if it was possible to ward off old age and disease by the intake of divine force.

M.: You can ward off the body itself.

D.: How to take in the divine force?

M.: It is already there. No need to take it in. It can be done only if it is out of you. But it is only you. There is no taking in or giving out.

D.: Is there any necessity to obey physical laws, *i.e.*, dieting?

M.: These are in imagination only.

Talk 167.

A man was worried because he could not succeed in concentrating the mind.

M.: Is it not only One even now? It always remains One only. Diversity lies in your imagination only. Unitary Being need not be acquired.

Talk 168.

It was mentioned to Sri Bhagavan that a Self-realised being needs no food, etc.

M.: You understand according to your state only.

Talk 169.

D.: How to control the mind?

M.: Catch hold of the mind.

D.: How?

M.: What is mind? Find it out. It is only an aggregate of thoughts.

D.: How to root out sexual impulse?

M.: By rooting out the false idea of the body being Self. There is no sex in the Self.

D.: How to realise it?

M.: Because you think you are the body, you see another as the body. Difference in sex arises. But you are not the body. Be the real Self. Then there is no sex.

Talk 170.

D.: Can a yogi know his past lives?

M.: Do you know the present life so well that you wish to know the past. Find out the present life, then the rest will follow. Even with our present limited knowledge we suffer so much. Why do you wish to burden yourself with more knowledge and suffer more?

D.: Can fasting help realisation?

M.: But it is temporary. Mental fast is the real aid. Fasting is not an end in itself. There must be spiritual development side by side. Absolute fasting makes the mind weak too. You cannot derive sufficient strength for the spiritual quest. Therefore take moderate food and go on practising.

D.: They say that after breaking a month's fast, ten days afterwards the mind becomes pure and steady and remains so forever.

M.: Yes, if the spiritual quest has been kept up right through the fast also.

Talk 171.

To another question Master said: The best is heart to heart speech and heart to heart hearing. That is the best *upadesa*.

D.: Is not guidance from Guru necessary?

M.: Are you apart from Guru?

D.: Is proximity helpful?

M.: Do you mean physical proximity? What is the good of it? The mind alone matters. The mind must be contacted.

28th February, 1936

Talk 172.

A visitor: What is the difference between meditation (*dhyana*) and investigation (*vichara*)?

M.: Both amount to the same. Those unfit for investigation must practise meditation. In this practice the aspirant forgetting himself meditates 'I am Brahman' or 'I am Siva'; thus he continues to hold to Brahman or Siva; this will ultimately end on the residual Being as Brahman or Siva which he will realise to be Pure Being, *i.e*. the Self.

He who engages in investigation starts holding on to himself, asks 'Who am I?' and the Self becomes clear to him.

D.: Will the knowledge gained by direct experience be lost afterwards?

M.: Kaivalya Navanita says it may be lost. Experience gained without rooting out all the *vasanas* cannot remain steady. Efforts must be made to eradicate the *vasanas*. Otherwise rebirth after death takes place. Some say direct experience results from hearing from one's master; others say it is from reflection; yet others say from one-pointedness and also from *samadhi*. Though they look different on the surface, ultimately they mean the same. Knowledge can remain unshaken only after all the *vasanas* are rooted out.

29th February, 1936

Talk 173.

D.: Lord, how can the grip of the ego be slackened?

M.: By not adding new *vasanas* to it.

D.: Any amount of *japa* has not slackened the grip!

M.: How so! It will duly slacken and vanish.

2nd March, 1936

Talk 174.

Dr. Hand, the American gentleman, asked: Are there two methods for finding the source of the ego?

M.: There are no two sources and no two methods. There is only one source and only one method.

D.: What is the difference between meditation and enquiry into the Self?

M.: Meditation is possible only if the ego be kept up. There is the ego and the object meditated upon. The method is indirect. Whereas the Self is only one. Seeking the ego, *i.e.*, its source, ego disappears. What is left over is the Self. This method is the direct one.

D.: Then what am I to do?

M.: To hold on to the Self.

D.: How?

M.: Even now you are the Self. But you are confounding this consciousness (or ego) with the absolute consciousness. This false identification is due to ignorance. Ignorance disappears along with the ego. Killing the ego is the only thing to accomplish. Realisation is already there. No attempt is needed to attain realisation. For it is nothing external, nothing new. It is always and everywhere here and now too.

3rd March, 1936

Talk 175.

Mr. N. Subba Rao asked: The *Visishtadvatins* say that *Atma Sakshatkara* (Self-Realisation) is preliminary to *Paramatma Sakshatkara* (God-Realisation). The difficulty seems to be considerable.

M.: What is *Atma Sakshatkara*? Are there two Atmas that one realises the other? There are not two selves. First get *Atma Sakshatkara* and then judge what follows.

D.: The Bhagavad Gita says there is God whose body is made up of all the souls.

M.: All are agreed on the annihilation of the ego. Let us get to business on the agreed point. *Nanajivatva* (different individualities) are mentioned by some *Advaitins* also. All that is immaterial to one's spiritual uplift. First realise the Self and then see what lies further.

7th March, 1936

Talk 176.

Dr. Hand intends leaving the Asramam tomorrow, visit the Himalayas (Hardwar), return here, go to Bombay and embark for Egypt, Palestine, Europe and finally to his native land, America.

He wants to go to the peak of the hill and desires Sri Bhagavan to accompany him. Sri Bhagavan might go up as high as is convenient for him and then wait for him to finish the climb - and catch him at an appointed spot on the hill. Sri Bhagavan smiled and asked him if he had heard of the experience of Dr. Beasly.

Dr. Hand: He is my friend. He has told me everything - wonderful! I am older than you, Maharshi. But do not give me up as a back number. I can climb up the hill as a boy would. When did you go to the peak last?

M.: About eleven years before. What did Dr. Beasly say?

D.: It is in strict confidence. I shall tell you everything if you are left alone with me.

Maharshi simply smiled.

D.: Maharshi! Are you conscious of a brotherhood of invisible *rishis*?

M.: If invisible, how to see them?

D.: In consciousness.

M.: There is nothing external in consciousness.

D.: Is there not the individuality? I fear to lose my individual being. Is there not in consciousness the consciousness of being human?

M.: Why fear to lose individuality? What is your state in dreamless sleep? Are you conscious of your individuality then?

D.: It is possible.

M.: But what is your experience? If individuality be there, would it be deep sleep?

D.: That depends on the interpretation. What does Maharshi say?

M.: Maharshi cannot speak for *your experience*. He does not force anything down your throat.

D.: I know. That is why I like Him and His teachings so much.

M.: Do you not really prepare your bed and are you not anxious to lose your individuality in deep sleep? Why fear it?

D.: What is the *nirvana* of Buddha?

M.: Loss of individuality.

D.: I dread that loss. Can there not be human consciousness in *nirvana*?

M.: Are there two selves in that case? Consider your present experience of sleep and say.

D.: I should think it possible to retain individual consciousness in *nirvana*. I fear the loss of individuality.

Later, the questioner went up and round the hill and wandered about fifteen miles between twelve noon and eight p.m. He returned tired and gave a very lucid speech on agriculture, social conditions, caste system, spiritual quality of the Indians, etc.

10th March, 1936

Talk 177.

D.: What is *mahat*?

M.: The projected light from Absolute Consciousness. Just as a seed swells up before sprouting and then sprouts and grows, so also the Absolute Consciousness projects light, manifests as the ego and grows up as the body and the universe.

Chit	=	Absolute
↓		
Mahat	=	projected consciousness (swollen seed)
↓		
Ahankara	=	ego
↓		
Manas	=	mind
↙ ↘		↙ ↘
Aham *Idam*	=	body world

Maj. Chadwick: Is it the same as cosmic consciousness?

M.: Yes, it is so before the birth of the ego and the universe. It comprises them all. Just as all the pictures thrown on the screen are visible by the light projected from a spot, so also the body and the other objects are all visible in that reflected consciousness. It is, therefore, also cosmic consciousness.

Again, (in the microcosm) the body and all other objects are all contained in the brain. The light is projected on the brain. The

impressions in the brain become manifest as the body and the worlds. Because the ego identifies itself with limitations, the body is considered separate and the world separate.

Lying down on your bed in a closed room with eyes closed you dream of London, the crowds there and you among them. A certain body is identified as yourself in the dream. London and the rest could not have entered into the room and into your brain; however, such wide space and duration of time were all perceptible to you. They must have been projected from the brain. Although the world is so big and the brain so small, is it not a matter of wonder that such a big creation is contained in such small compass as one's brain? Though the screen is limited, still all the pictures of the cinema pass on it and are visible there. You do not wonder how such a long procession of events could be manifest on such a small screen. Similarly with the objects and the brain.

D.: Then cosmic consciousness is not the same as realisation?

M.: Cosmic consciousness is behind the ego. It may be called *Isvara*, and the ego is *jiva*. *Isvara* may also be said to be the Absolute. There is no difference there.

Para = *Absolute*

↓

Isvara = *Cosmic consciousness (Mahat)*

↓

Jiva —— *Jagat* = *Individual consciousness and the world*

The consciousness which pervades even *Isvara* is the Absolute one.

Talk 178.

D.: What is the flame mentioned in *Vichara Sangraha*. It is said to be *Atma Jyoti* and one is directed to find the reality behind it.

M.: The Vedas mention the flame, *Tasyas sikhaya madhye paramatma vyavasthitah*. That flame is to be identified with the ego-consciousness.

Talk 179.

Mr. Frydman had asked Swami Ramdas something, to which he replied that there would be no more births for himself. The engineer had pointed out there should be no anxiety regarding rebirth. There will be the same Rama, the same Ramdas, the same search for Rama and the same bliss of realisation. What objection could be there for the repetition of this Rama-Lila? Ramdas had admitted that there could be no objection, that it would be an enjoyment and a game. The engineer further said that Ramdas added that Ramdas had found Rama merged in Him and happy in that union. They are the same, still there was Ramdas, there was Rama, there was the union, there was the Bliss. That is eternal. Saying it, he asked what Sri Bhagavan would say to it.

M.: It is all as true as the present events.

Talk 180.

Later, the same gentleman said that sleep was a state of oblivion and the wakeful state was the mind's activity. The mind was in a potential state in sleep.

M.: Were you not in sleep?

D.: Yes, I was. But in a state of oblivion. There must be a witness of oblivion and of the mind which says that 'I' am continuous in both states.

M.: Who is this witness? You speak of 'witness'. There must be an object and a subject to witness. These are creations of the mind. The idea of witness is in the mind. If there was the witness of oblivion did he say, 'I witness oblivion'? You, with your mind, said just now that there must be a witness. Who was the witness? You must reply 'I'. Who is that 'I' again? You are identifying yourself with the ego and say 'I'. Is this ego 'I', the witness? It is the mind that speaks. It cannot be witness of itself. With self-imposed limitations you think that there is a witness of mind and of oblivion. You also say, "I am the witness". That one who witnesses the oblivion must say, "I witness oblivion". The present mind cannot arrogate to itself that position.

The whole position becomes thus untenable. Consciousness is unlimited. On becoming limited it simply arrogates to itself the position. There is really nothing to witness. IT is. simple BEING.

Talk 181.

D.: Yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama. Which is that *dhama*? Is it not the Absolute state beyond cosmic consciousness?

M.: Yes.

D.: '*Na Nivartante*' would mean not covered by ignorance again.

M.: Yes.

D.: Does it follow by inference that those who reach Cosmic Consciousness have not escaped from the clutches of ignorance?

M.: That is what is meant by saying that all lokas, even the Brahma loka, do not release one from rebirth. *Vide*. the *Bhagavad Gita:* "Reaching ME, there is no rebirth .... All others are in bondage." Moreover, so long as you think that there is *gati* (movement) - as implied in the word *gatva* (having gone to) - there is *punaravritti* (return) also. Again *gati* implies your *Purvagamanam* (birth). What is birth? It is birth of ego.

Once born you reach something; if you reach it you return also. Therefore leave off all this verbiage! *Be as you are*. See who you are and remain as the Self, free from birth, going, coming and returning.

D.: True. However often this truth is heard, still it eludes us and we forget it.

M.: Quite so. Reminders are often necessary.

Talk 182.

In the course of the day an interesting photo was missing. Sri Bhagavan appeared concerned about it. Mr. Frydman asked how Sri Bhagavan viewed all these matters. Sri Bhagavan said: "Suppose you dream that you are taking me to Poland. You wake up and ask me. 'I dreamt so and so. Did you dream so or know it? Or how do you view it'?"

D.: But you are not aware of the happenings in front of you?

M.: These are all workings of the mind and the questions also.

Then again Sri Bhagavan related an episode in Sri Rama's search for Sita. Parvati asked Siva why Rama, the Perfect Being, was grieving at the loss of Sita. Siva said that Rama was still Perfect. If the Perfection need be tested and made clear, Parvati might appear as Sita before Rama and see what happened. So she did. Rama ignored her appearance and was still crying out, "Ha! Sita! Ha! Sita!" and moved on like a blind man, without taking any notice of Parvati - (*Cf*. Dialogue 218.)

13th March, 1936

Talk 183.

A gentleman from Bombay said: "I asked Mother in Sri Aurobindo Ashram the following question: 'I keep my mind blank without thoughts arising so that God might show Himself in His true Being. But I do not perceive anything.

"*The reply was to this effect:* 'The attitude is right. The Power will come down from above. It is a direct experience'."

So he asked what further he should do.

M.: Be what you are. There is nothing to come down or become manifest. All that is needful is to lose the ego, That what is, is always there. Even now you are That. You are not apart from it. The blank is seen by you. You are there to see the blank. What do you wait for? The thought "I have not seen," the expectation to see and the desire of getting something, are all the working of the ego. You have fallen into the snares of the ego. The ego says all these and not *you. Be yourself* and nothing more!

Talk 184.

M.: To imagine *Muladhara* at the bottom, the Heart at the centre, or the head at the top or over all these, is all wrong. In one word, *to think is not your real nature*.

Talk 185.

M.: In the sacred literature the following are seen:-

"Said without uttering"

"Showed remaining still as ever," etc.

Which is this unspoken word? It is only Silence, *Pranava* or the *Mahavakya*.* These are also called *the Word*.

Talk 186.

M.: We read a newspaper and all the articles therein, but do not care to know anything about the paper itself. We take the chaff but not the substance. The substratum on which all this is printed is the paper and if we know the substratum all else will be known (like wall and paintings).

D.: You said the only ONE which exists is the REAL. What is that only ONE?

M.: The ONE only is the *Sat*, the existence, that appears as the world, the things that we see and we ourselves.

D.: What is Atman? Is there a finality for the ATMAN?

M.: First learn what is Atman. If we know this then we can query as to whether it has a finality or not. Which do you call ATMAN?

D.: Jiva is ATMAN.

M.: Learn what *jiva* is. What is the difference between *jiva* and Atman? Is *jiva* itself Atman or is there any separate thing as Atman? There is an end for what you observe; that which is created has a destruction or end. That which is not created has no end. That which exists cannot be observed. It is unobservable. We must find out what it is that appears; the destruction of that which appears is the end. *That which exists, exists for ever; that which newly appears is later lost*.

D.: What happens after birth in human form, what happens to the *jiva*?

M.: Let us know first what we are. We do not understand what we are, and until we know what we are there is no room for such a question. (Bhagavan obviously here refers to the confusion of body as Atman - *dehatma buddhi* - which is the cause for this confusion of ideas of death and birth, for Atman has no birth or death, it is untainted by the elements of Earth, Fire, Air and Water, etc.) (*Gita* II, 11) - *Asochyam anvosochas tvam, projnavadamscha bhashase*, etc. - What is it that had birth? Whom do you call a man? If, instead of seeking explanation for birth, death and after-death matters, the

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* Mahavakyas are four: (1) "That art Thou." (2) "I am Brahman." (3) "This Self is Brahman." (4) "*Prajnana* (Absolute Knowledge) is Brahman."

question is raised as to who and how you are now, these questions will not arise. You are the same while asleep (deep sleep), in dream and in waking state. Is the 'I' thought *jiva*, or the body *jiva*? Is this thought or nature? Or is the experience that we live, etc., our nature? (Quotes the sloka from the *Gita: Yada te* . . . II, 52.)

D.: Why is *Atma vichara* necessary?

M.: If you do not make *Atma vichara*, then *loka vichara* creeps in. That which is not, is sought for, but not that which is obvious. When once you have found what you seek, *vichara* (enquiry) also ceases and you rest in it. As long as one is confusing the body with the Atman, Atman is said to be lost and one is said to seek for it, but the ATMAN itself is never lost. It always exists. A body is said to be Atman, an *indriya* is said to be Atman, then there is the *Jivatman* and *Paramatman* and what not. There are a thousand and one things called Atman. The search for Atman is to know that which is really Atman.

SAMADHI: KEVALA AND SAHAJA

Talk 187.

D.: I maintain that the physical body of the man sunk in *samadhi* as a result of unbroken contemplation of the Self becomes motionless for that reason. It may be active or inactive. The mind fixed in such contemplation will not be affected by the body or the senses being restless. A disturbance of the mind is not always the forerunner of physical activity. Another man asserts that physical unrest certainly prevents *nirvikalpa samadhi* or unbroken contemplation. What is your opinion? You are the standing proof of my statement.

M.: Both of you are right, you refer to *sahaja nirvikalpa* and the other refers to *kevala nirvikalpa*. In the one case the mind lies immersed in the Light of the Self (whereas the same lies in the darkness of ignorance in deep sleep). The subject discriminates one from the other - *samadhi*, stirring up from *samadhi*, and activity thereafter, unrest of the body, of the sight of the vital force and of the mind, the cognizance of objects and activity, are all obstructions for him.

In *sahaja*, however, the mind has resolved itself into the Self and has been lost. Differences and obstructions mentioned above do not therefore exist here. The activities of such a being are like the feeding

of a somnolent boy, perceptible to the onlooker (but not to the subject). The driver sleeping on his moving cart is not aware of the motion of the cart, because his mind is sunk in darkness. Similarly the *sahaja jnani* remains unaware of his bodily activities because his mind is dead - having been resolved in the ecstasy of *Chit Ananda* (Self).

The two words contemplation and *samadhi* have been used loosely in the question.

Contemplation is a forced mental process, whereas *samadhi* lies beyond effort.

Sleep	*Kevala*	*Sahaja*
(1) mind alive (2) sunk in oblivion	(1) mind alive (2) sunk in light (3) like a bucket with the rope left lying in the water in a well; (4) to be drawn out by the other end of the rope.	(1) mind dead (2) resolved into the Self; (3) like a river discharged into the ocean and its identity lost; (4) a river cannot be redirected from the ocean.

Talk 188.

The essence of mind is only awareness or consciousness. When the ego, however, dominates it, it functions as the reasoning, thinking or sensing faculty. The cosmic mind being not limited by the ego, has nothing separate from itself and is therefore only aware. This is what the Bible means by "I am that I AM".

The ego-ridden mind has its strength sapped and is too weak to resist the torturing thoughts. The egoless mind is happy in deep, dreamless sleep. Clearly therefore Bliss and misery are only modes of mind; but the weak mode is not easily interchangeable with the strong mode. Activity is weakness and consequently miserable; passivity is strength and therefore blissful. The dormant strength is not apparent and therefore not availed of.

The cosmic mind, manifesting in some rare being, is able to effect the linkage in others of the individual (weak) mind with the universal (strong) mind of the inner recess. Such a rare being is called the GURU or *God in manifestation*.

19th May, 1936

Talk 189.

Mr. M. Oliver Lacombe, a middle-aged Frenchman who was on a visit to India being delegated by the Institute of Indian Civilisation of the University of Paris, came here from French India. Among others he had desired to meet Maharshi; he came and stayed here about three hours. He had read, in the Sanskrit original, the Bhagavad Gita, the Upanishads and the Sutras with commentaries by Sri Sankara and Ramanuja.

He asked: Is Maharshi's teaching the same as Sankara's?

M.: Maharshi's teaching is only an expression of his own experience and realisation. Others find that it tallies with Sri Sankara's.

D.: Quite so. Can it be put in other ways to express the same realisation?

M.: A realised person will use his own language. Sri Bhagavan added: SILENCE is the best language.

D.: What does Maharshi say about *hatha yoga* or *Tantric* practices?

M.: Maharshi does not criticise any of the existing methods. All are good for the purification of the mind. Because the purified mind alone is capable of grasping his method and sticking to its practice.

D.: Which is the best of the different yogas, *Karma, Jnana, Bhakti* or *Hatha*?

M.: See stanza 10 of "Upadesa Sara". To remain in the Self amounts to all these in their highest sense.

Maharshi added: In dreamless sleep there is no world, no ego and no unhappiness. But the Self remains. In the waking state there are all these; yet there is the Self. One has only to remove the transitory happenings in order to realise the ever-present beatitude of the Self. Your nature is Bliss. Find that on which all the rest are superimposed and you then remain as the pure Self.

D.: Yes. It amounts to the removal of alien limitations for discovering the ever-present Self. That is what Sankara says. There is no attainment or loss.

M.: Quite so. (Aside) He understands.

D.: How is work to be done ordinarily for an aspirant?

M.: Without self-identification with the actor. For instance, did you intend visiting this place while in Paris?

D.: No!

M.: You see how you are acting without your intention to do so? The Gita says that a man cannot remain without acting. The purpose of one's birth will be fulfilled whether you will it or not. Let the purpose fulfil itself.

D.: Why are there so many methods mentioned? For instance Sri Ramakrishna says that *bhakti* is the best means for salvation.

M.: It is according to the standpoint of the aspirant. You have studied the Gita. Sri Krishna said: "There was never a time when I, and you, and these kings were not; nor will they not be in future. That which is unreal never exists. But that which is real never disappears. All that ever was even now is and will ever be." Again, "I taught this Truth to Aditya; he taught it to Manu; etc." Arjuna asked: "How can it be? You were born some years back and only recently. How could you have taught Aditya?" Sri Krishna answered; "Yes. We have had several births in the past. I know mine; whereas you do not know yours. I tell you what happened in those past births."

Look! That Krishna who began saying there was not I, nor were you, nor these kings, says now that he had several births before. Krishna does not contradict Himself, though it looks like it. He conforms to the outlook of Arjuna and speaks to him from his level.

There is a parallel passage in the Bible where Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, I am". The teachings of the Sages are suited to the time, place, people and other surroundings.

The visitor said he was leaving with regret. ...

Maharshi smilingly interrupted, "There is no leaving or returning." The Frenchman at once said, "He has transcended time and space." He returned to Pondicherry.

30th May, 1936

Talk 190.

There is a pet squirrel in the hall which usually retires into its cage before nightfall. Just as Maharshi was telling it to retire for the night a visitor who had announced that he had attained the transcendent consciousness suggested that water might be offered to it, since it was likely to be thirsty on this hot evening. His presumption to understand animals evoked no response. He repeated it. After a few minutes' silence Maharshi said, "You are probably thirsty after your long meditation in the hot Sun on the hotter rocks and you would like to drink a jug of water."

D.: Quite so. I have taken water.

M.: The squirrel is not so thirsty. Because you were practising austerities in the heat of the Sun you should feel thirsty. Why prescribe it for the squirrel?

Maharshi added: I noticed him standing on the hot rocks facing the Sun with eyes closed. I stood there for a while but did not want to disturb him and came away. These people do as they please.

D.: What I did, I did not intend beforehand. It was spontaneous.

M.: Oh! I see! Whatever we others do, we do with intention! You seem to have transcended all!

D.: This is not the first time I did so. You yourself inspire me and make me do all these things. Yet you ask me why I did it. How is it?

M.: I see. You are doing actions being controlled by me. Then the fruits also should be considered similarly to be mine and not yours.

D.: So they are undoubtedly. I act not of my free will but inspired by you. I have no will of my own.

M.: Enough of this rubbish! So did Duryodhana of old (in the *Mahabharata*) say:

janami dharmam nacha me pravrittih,
janamyadharmam nacha me nivrittih.
kenapi devana hridi sthitena
yatha niyuktosmitatha karomi.

What is the difference between you two?

D.: I see no difference. But I have no will and act without it.

M.: You have risen high above the common run. We others are acting with personal will.

D.: How, Sir? You have said in one of your works that action can be automatic.

M.: Enough! Enough! You and another visitor behave as transcendental beings! You are both fully learned. You need not learn more. I would not have said all this had you not been coming here frequently. Do as you please. But these eccentricities of the beginner's stage will become known in their true light after some time.

D.: But I have been in this state for such a long time.

M.: Enough!

Talk 191.

Mr. Cohen, a resident disciple, was speaking of yoga method.

Maharshi remarked: Patanjali's first sutra is applicable to all systems of yoga. The aim is the cessation of mental activities. The methods differ. So long as there is effort made towards that goal it is called yoga. The effort is the yoga.

The cessation can be brought about in so many ways.

(1) By examining the mind itself. When the mind is examined, its activities cease automatically. This is the method of *jnana*. The pure mind is the Self.

(2) Looking for the source of the mind is another method. The source may be said to be God or Self or consciousness.

(3) Concentrating upon one thought make all other thoughts disappear. Finally that thought also disappears; and

(4) *Hatha Yoga*.

All methods are one and the same inasmuch as they all tend to the same goal.

It is necessary to be aware while controlling thoughts. Otherwise it will lead to sleep. That awareness, the chief factor, is indicated by the fact of Patanjali emphasising *pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi* even after *pranayama*. *Pranayama* makes the mind steady

and suppresses thoughts. Then why develop further? Because awareness then is the one necessary factor. Such states can be imitated by taking morphia, chloroform, etc. They do not lead to *Moksha* because they lack awareness.

3rd June, 1936

Talk 192.

Maharshi explained in the course of conversation:

Whoever desires liberation? Everyone wants only happiness - happiness too as found in the enjoyment of the senses. This question was asked of a Guru, and the latter answered: "Quite so. That happiness which is the result of enjoyment by the senses is the same as that of liberation. That desire of such liberation is one of the four qualifications for attainment. This is common to all. So all are eligible for this knowledge - Self-knowledge."

In fact there may not be found any individual in the world who possesses all the qualities in perfection necessary for an aspirant as mentioned in Yoga Sutras, etc. Still pursuit of Self-knowledge should not be abandoned.

Everyone is the Self by his own experience. Still he is not aware, he identifies the Self with the body and feels miserable. This is the greatest of all mysteries. One is the Self. Why not abide as the Self and be done with miseries?

In the beginning one has to be told that he is not the body, because he thinks that he is the body only. Whereas he is the body and all else. The body is only a part. Let him know it finally. He must first discern consciousness from insentience and be the consciousness only. Later let him realise that insentience is not apart from consciousness.

This is discrimination (*viveka*). The initial discrimination must persist to the end. Its fruit is liberation.

Talk 193.

Maharshi observed: Free-will and destiny are ever-existent. Destiny is the result of past action; it concerns the body. Let the body act as may suit it. Why are you concerned with it? Why do you pay attention

to it? Free-will and Destiny last as long as the body lasts. But wisdom (*jnana*) transcends both. The Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance. Should anything happen, it happens as the result of one's past actions, of divine will and of other factors.

Talk 194.

Mr. Subba Rao, a visitor from Amalapuram, asked: How to control the mind?

M.: Get hold of the mind.

D.: How?

M.: Mind is intangible. In fact, it does not exist. The surest way of control is to seek it. Then its activities cease.

6th June, 1936

Talk 195.

Mr. Jharka, a gentleman from the University of Benares, holding the M.A. and the M.Sc. degrees, said that he was stricken with grief due to bereavement of wife and children. He sought peace of mind and asked how to get it.

M.: It is in the mind that birth and death, pleasure and pain, in short the world and ego exist. If the mind is destroyed all these are destroyed too. Note that it should be annihilated, not just made latent. For the mind is dormant in sleep. It does not know anything. Still, on waking up, you are as you were before. There is no end of grief. But if the mind be destroyed the grief will have no background and will disappear along with the mind.

D.: How to destroy the mind?

M.: Seek the mind. On being sought, it will disappear.

D.: I do not understand.

M.: The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts arise because there is the thinker. The thinker is the ego. The ego, if sought, will vanish automatically. The ego and the mind are the same. The ego is the root-thought from which all other thoughts arise.

D.: How to seek the mind?

M.: Dive within. You are now aware that the mind rises up from within. So sink within and seek.

D.: I do not yet understand how it is to be done.

M.: You are practising breath-control. Mechanical breath-control will not lead one to the goal. It is only an aid. While doing it mechanically take care to be alert in mind and remember the 'I' thought and seek its source. Then you will find that where breath sinks, there 'I-thought' arises. They sink and rise together. The 'I-thought' also will sink along with breath. Simultaneously, another luminous and infinite 'I-I' will become manifest, which will be continuous and unbroken. That is the goal. It goes by different names - God, Self, *Kundalini Sakti, Consciousness, Yoga, Bhakti, Jnana*, etc.

D.: Not clear yet.

M.: When the attempt is made, it will of itself take you to the goal.

9th June, 1936

Talk 196.

A visitor asked about the three methods mentioned in *Ramana Gita* - Chapter II.

Maharshi pointed out that breath-retention is an aid to control of mind, *i.e.*, suppression or annihilation of thoughts. One person may practise breath-control, inhalation, exhalation and retention or retention only. Still another type of practising meditator, on controlling the mind, controls the breath and its retention automatically results. Watching the inhalation and exhalation is also breath-control. These methods are only apparently three-fold. They are in fact really one, because they lead to the same goal. They are however differently adopted according to the stage of the aspirant and his antecedent predisposition or tendencies. Really there are only two methods: enquiry and devotion. One leads to the other.

D.: Seeking the 'I' there is nothing to be seen.

M.: Because you are accustomed to identify yourself with the body and sight with the eyes, therefore, you say you do not see anything. What is there to be seen? Who is to see? How to see? There is only one consciousness which, manifesting as 'I-thought', identifies itself

with the body, projects itself through the eyes and sees the objects around. The individual is limited in the waking state and expects to see something different. The evidence of his senses will be the seal of authority. But he will not admit that the seer, the seen and the sight are all manifestations of the same consciousness - namely, 'I-I'. Contemplation helps one to overcome the illusion that the Self must be visual. In truth, there is nothing visual. How do you feel the 'I' now? Do you hold a mirror before you to know your own being? The awareness is the 'I'. Realise it and that is the truth.

D.: On enquiry into the origin of thoughts there is a perception of 'I'. But it does not satisfy me.

M.: Quite right. The perception of 'I' is associated with a form, maybe the body. There should be nothing associated with the pure Self. The Self is the unassociated, pure Reality, in whose light, the body, the ego, etc. shine. On stilling all thoughts the pure consciousness remains over.

Just on waking from sleep and before becoming aware of the world there is that pure 'I-I'. Hold to it without sleeping or without allowing thoughts to possess you. If that is held firm it does not matter even though the world is seen. The seer remains unaffected by the phenomena.

Talk 197.

Gul and Shirin Byramjee, two Parsi ladies of Ahmedabad, arrived this day. They spoke at night to Maharshi: "Bhagavan! We have been spiritually inclined from our childhood. We have read several books on philosophy, and are attracted by Vedanta. So we read the Upanishads, *Yoga Vasishtha*, Bhagavad Gita, etc. We try to meditate, but there is no progress in our meditation. We do not understand how to realise. Can you kindly help us towards realisation?"

M.: How do you meditate?

D.: I begin to ask myself "Who am I?", eliminate body as not 'I', the breath as not 'I', the mind as not 'I' and I am not able to proceed further.

M.: Well, that is so far as the intellect goes. Your process is only intellectual. Indeed, all the scriptures mention the process only to

guide the seeker to know the Truth. The Truth cannot be directly pointed out. Hence this intellectual process.

You see, the one who eliminates all the *not I* cannot eliminate the 'I'. To say 'I am not this' or 'I am that' there must be the 'I'. This 'I' is only the ego or the 'I-thought'. After the rising up of this 'I-thought', all other thoughts arise. The 'I-thought' is therefore the root-thought. If the root is pulled out all others are at the same time uprooted. Therefore seek the root 'I', question yourself "Who am I?"; find out its source. Then all these will vanish and the pure Self will remain ever.

D.: How to do it?

M.: The 'I' is always there - in deep sleep, in dream and in wakefulness. The one in sleep is the same as that who now speaks. There is always the feeling of 'I'. Otherwise do you deny your existence? You do not. You say 'I am'. Find out who is.

D.: Even so, I do not understand. 'I', you say, is the wrong 'I' now. How to eliminate this wrong 'I'?

M.: You need not eliminate the wrong 'I'. How can 'I' eliminate itself? All that you need do is to find out its origin and abide there. Your efforts can extend only thus far. Then the Beyond will take care of itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach it.

D.: If 'I' am always - here and now, why do I not feel so?

M.: That is it. Who says it is not felt? Does the real 'I' say it or the false 'I'? Examine it. You will find it is the wrong 'I'. The wrong 'I' is the obstruction. It has to be removed in order that the true 'I' may not be hidden. The feeling that I have not realised is the obstruction to realisation. In fact it is already realised; there is nothing more to be realised. Otherwise, the realisation will be new; it has not existed so far, it must take place hereafter. What is born will also die. If realisation be not eternal it is not worth having. Therefore what we seek is not that which must happen afresh. It is only that which is eternal but not now known due to obstructions; it is that we seek. All that we need do is to remove the obstruction. That which is eternal is not known to be so because of ignorance. Ignorance is the obstruction. Get over this ignorance and all will be well.

The ignorance is identical with the ‘I-thought’. Find its source and it will vanish.

The ‘I-thought’ is like a spirit which, although not palpable, rises up simultaneously with the body, flourishes and disappears with it. The body-consciousness is the wrong ‘I’. Give up this body-consciousness. It is done by seeking the source ‘I’. The body does not say ‘I am’. It is you who say, ‘I am the body!’ Find out who this ‘I’ is. Seeking its source it will vanish.

D.: Then, will there be bliss?

M.: Bliss is coeval with Being-Consciousness. All the arguments relating to the eternal Being of that Bliss apply to Bliss also. Your nature is Bliss. Ignorance is now hiding that Bliss. Remove the ignorance for Bliss to be freed.

D.: Should we not find out the ultimate reality of the world, individual and God?

M.: These are all conceptions of the ‘I’. They arise only after the advent of the ‘I-thought’. Did you think of them in your deep sleep? You existed in deep sleep and the same you are now speaking. If they be real should they not be in your sleep also? They are only dependent upon the ‘I-thought’. Again does the world tell you ‘I am the world’? Does the body say ‘I am body’? You say, “This is the world”, “this is body” and so on. So these are only your conceptions. Find out who you are and there will be an end of all your doubts.

D.: What becomes of the body after realisation? Does it exist or not? We see realised beings acting like others.

M.: This question need not arise now. Let it be asked after realisation, if need be. As for the realised beings let them take care of themselves. Why do you worry about them?

In fact, after realisation the body and all else will not appear different from the Self.

D.: Being always Being-Consciousness-Bliss, why does God place us in difficulties? Why did He create us?

M.: Does God come and tell you that He has placed you in difficulties? It is you who say so. It is again the wrong ‘I’. If that disappears there will be no one to say that God created this or that.

That which is does not even say 'I am'. For, does any doubt rise that 'I am not'? Only in such a case should one be reminding oneself 'I am a man'. One does not. On the other hand, if a doubt arises whether he is a cow or a buffalo he has to remind himself that he is not a cow, etc., but 'I am a man.' This would never happen. Similarly with one's own existence and realisation.

10th June, 1936

Talk 198.

Some ladies asked if there is rebirth of man as a lower animal.

M.: Yes. It is possible, as illustrated by Jada Bharata - the scriptural anecdote of a royal sage, having been reborn as a deer.

D.: Is the individual capable of spiritual progress in the animal body?

M.: Not unlikely, though it is exceedingly rare

D.: What is Guru's Grace? How does it work?

M.: Guru is the Self.

D.: How does it lead to realisation?

M.: Isvaro gururatmeti ... (God is the same as Guru and Self ...). A person begins with dissatisfaction. Not content with the world he seeks satisfaction of desires by prayers to God; his mind is purified; he longs to know God more than to satisfy his carnal desires. Then God's Grace begins to manifest. God takes the form of a Guru and appears to the devotee; teaches him the Truth; purifies the mind by his teachings and contact; the mind gains strength, is able to turn inward; with meditation it is purified yet further, and eventually remains still without the least ripple. That stillness is the Self. The Guru is both exterior and interior. From the exterior he gives a push to the mind to turn inward; from the interior he pulls the mind towards the Self and helps the mind to achieve quietness. That is Grace.

Hence there is no difference between God, Guru and Self.

Talk 199.

The ladies later asked several questions relating to their present inability to realise the already realised, eternal Self. The sign of Realisation would be Bliss, which was absent.

Maharshi said: There is only one consciousness. But we speak of several kinds of consciousness, as body-consciousness, Self-consciousness. They are only relative states of the same Absolute consciousness. Without consciousness, time and space do not exist. They appear in consciousness. It is like a screen on which these are cast as pictures and move as in a cinema show. The Absolute consciousness is our real nature.

D.: From where do these objects arise?

M.: Just from where you rise. Know the subject first and then question about the object.

D.: It is only one aspect of the question.

M.: The subject comprehends the object also. That one aspect is an all-comprehensive aspect. See yourself first and then see the objects. What is not in you cannot appear outside.

D.: I am not satisfied.

M.: Satisfaction can be only when you reach the source. Otherwise restlessness exists.

D.: Is the Supreme Being with or without attributes?

M.: Know first if you are with or without attributes.

D.: What is samadhi?

M.: One's own true nature.

D.: Why then is effort necessary to attain it?

M.: Whose is the effort?

D.: Maharshi knows that I am ignorant.

M.: Do you know that you are ignorant? Knowledge of ignorance is no ignorance.

All scriptures are only for the purpose of investigating if there are two consciousnesses. Everyone's experience proves the existence of only one consciousness. Can that one divide itself into two? Is any division felt in the Self? Awaking from sleep one finds oneself the same in the wakeful as well as in the sleep states. That is the experience of each one. The difference lies in seeking, in the outlook. Because you imagine that you are the seer separate from the experience, this difference arises. Experience shows that your being is the same all through.

D.: From where did ignorance come?

M.: There is no such thing as ignorance. It never arises. Everyone is Knowledge itself. Only Knowledge does not shine easily. The dispelling of ignorance is Wisdom which always exists - *e.g.*, the necklace remaining round the neck though supposed to have been lost; or each of the ten fools failing to count himself and counting only the others. To whom is knowledge or ignorance?

D.: Can we not proceed from external to internal?

M.: Is there any difference like that? Do you feel the difference - external and internal - in your sleep? This difference is only with reference to the body and arises with body-consciousness ('I-thought'). The so-called waking state is itself an illusion.

Turn your vision inward and then the whole world will be full of Supreme Spirit. The world is said to be illusion. Illusion is really Truth. Even the material sciences trace the origin of the universe to some one primordial matter - subtle, exceedingly subtle.

God is the same both to those who say the world is real and to their opponents. Their outlook is different. You need not entangle yourself in such disputations. The goal is one and the same for all. Look to it.

14th June, 1936

Talk 200.

Mr. Cohen desired an explanation of the term "blazing light" used by Paul Brunton in the last chapter of *A Search in Secret India*.

Maharshi: Since the experience is through the mind only it appears first as a blaze of light. The mental predispositions are not yet destroyed. The mind is however functioning in its infinite capacity in this experience.

As for *nirvikalpa samadhi* i.e., *samadhi*, of non-differentiation (undifferentiated, supreme, beatific repose), it consists of pure consciousness, which is capable of illumining knowledge or ignorance; it is also beyond light or darkness. That it is not darkness is certain; can it be however said to be not light? At present objects are perceived only in light. Is it wrong to say that realisation of one's Self requires a light? Here *light* would mean the consciousness which reveals as the Self only.

The yogis are said to see photisms of colours and lights preliminary to Self-Realisation by the practice of yoga.

Once before Goddess Parvati practised austerities for realising the Supreme. She saw some kinds of light. She rejected them because they emanated from the Self, leaving the Self as it was ever before. She determined that they were not supreme. She continued Her austerities and experienced a limitless light. She determined that this also was only a phenomenon and not the Supreme Reality. Still she continued Her austerities until she gained transcendental peace. She realised that it was Supreme, that the Self was the sole Reality.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says, "Seek Brahman through penance". Later on, "Penance is Brahman". Another Upanishad says, "Itself is penance which is again made up of wisdom alone". "There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor fire; all these shine forth by Its light".

Talk 201.

The Parsi ladies asked for an illustration to explain why the Self, though ever-present and most intimate, is not being realised.

Maharshi cited the stories of (1) *Svakanthabharanam katha* - the story of the necklace, on the neck itself, not being detected; (2) *Dasama* - of the ten fools who counted only nine, each of them omitting to count himself; (3) the lion's cub, brought up in a herd of goats; (4) Karna not knowing his real parentage and (5) the king's son brought up in a low-class family.

They further asked for Maharshi's opinion of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga, and his claim to have probed beyond the experiences of the Vedic *rishis* and the Mother's opinion of the fitness of her disciples to begin with the realisation of the Upanishadic *rishis*.

M.: Aurobindo advises complete surrender. Let us do that first and await results, and discuss further, if need be afterwards and not now. There is no use discussing transcendental experiences by those whose limitations are not divested. Learn what surrender is. It is to merge in the source of the ego. The ego is surrendered to the Self. Everything is dear to us because of love of the Self.

The Self is that to which we surrender our ego and let the Supreme Power, *i.e.*, the Self, do what it pleases. The ego is already the Self's. We have no rights over the ego, even as it is. However, supposing we had, we must surrender them.

D.: What about bringing down divine consciousness from above?

M.: As if the same is not already in the Heart? "O Arjuna, I am in the expanse of the Heart," says Sri Krishna "He who is in the sun, is also in this man", says a *mantra* in the Upanishads. "The Kingdom of God is within", says the Bible. All are thus agreed that God is within. What is to be brought down? From where? Who is to bring what, and why?

Realisation is only the removal of obstacles to the recognition of the eternal, immanent Reality. Reality is. It need not be taken from place to place.

D.: What about Aurobindo's claim to start from Self-Realisation and develop further?

M.: Let us first realise and then see.

Then Maharshi began to speak of similar theories: The *Visishtadvaitins* say that the Self is first realised and the realised individual soul is surrendered to the universal soul. Only then is it complete. The part is given up to the whole. That is liberation and *sayujya* union. Simple Self-Realisation stops at isolating the pure Self, says *Visishtadvaita*.

The *siddhas* say that the one who leaves his body behind as a corpse cannot attain *mukti*. They are reborn. Only those whose bodies dissolve in space, in light or away from sight, attain liberation. The *Advaitins* of Sankara's school stop short at Self-Realisation and this is not the end, the *siddhas* say.

There are also others who extol their own pet theories as the best, *e.g.*, late Venkaswami Rao of Kumbakonam, Brahmananda Yogi of Cuddappah, etc.

The fact is: There is Reality. It is not affected by any discussions. Let us abide as Reality and not engage in futile discussions as to its nature, etc.

15th June, 1936

Talk 202.

A sad-looking Punjabi gentleman announced himself to Maharshi as having been directed to him by Sri Sankaracharya of Kamakotipeetam, from Jalesvar near Puri, Jagannath. He is a world tourist. He has practised *Hatha Yoga* and some contemplation along the lines of “I am Brahman”. In a few moments a blank prevails, his brain gets heated and he gets afraid of death. He wants guidance from Maharshi.

M.: Who sees the blank?

D.: I know that I see it.

M.: The consciousness overlooking the blank is the Self.

D.: That does not satisfy me. I cannot realise it.

M.: The fear of death is only after the ‘I-thought’ arises. Whose death do you fear? For whom is the fear? There is the identification of the Self with the body. So long as there is this, there will be fear.

D.: But I am not aware of my body.

M.: Who says that he is not aware?

D.: I do not understand.

He was then asked to say what exactly was his method of meditation. He said: “*Aham Brahmasmi*” (“I am Brahman”).

M.: “I am Brahman” is only a thought. Who says it? Brahman itself does not say so. What need is there for it to say it? Nor can the real ‘I’ say so. For ‘I’ always abides as Brahman. To be saying it is only a thought. Whose thought is it? All thoughts are from the unreal ‘I’. *i.e.*, the ‘I’- thought. Remain without thinking. So long as there is thought there will be fear.

D.: As I go on thinking of it there is forgetfulness, the brain becomes heated and I am afraid.

M.: Yes, the mind is concentrated in the brain and hence you get a hot sensation there. It is because of the ‘I-thought’. So long as there is thought there will be forgetfulness. There is the thought “I am Brahman”; forgetfulness supervenes; then the ‘I-thought’ arises and simultaneously the fear of death also. Forgetfulness and thought are

for 'I-thought' only. Hold it; it will disappear as a phantom. What remains over is the real 'I'. That is the Self. 'I am Brahman' is an aid to concentration. It keeps off other thoughts. That one thought alone persists. See whose is that thought. It will be found to be from 'I'. Wherefrom is the 'I' thought? Probe into it. The 'I-thought' will vanish. The Supreme Self will shine forth of itself. No further effort is needed.

When the one Real 'I' remains alone, it will not be saying; "I am Brahman". Does a man go on repeating "I am a man"? Unless he is challenged, why should he declare himself a man? Does anyone mistake oneself for a brute, that he should say "No. I am not a brute; I am a man"? Similarly, Brahman or 'I' being alone, there is no one there to challenge it and so there is no need to be repeating "I am Brahman".

17th June, 1936

Talk 203.

Mr. Varma, Financial Secretary of the Posts and Telegraphs Department, Delhi: He has read Paul Brunton's *Search in Secret India* and *The Secret Path*. He lost his wife with whom he had led a happy life for eleven or twelve years. In his grief he seeks solace. He does not find solace in reading books: wants to tear them up. He does not intend to ask questions. He simply wants to sit here and derive what solace he can in the presence of Maharshi.

Maharshi, as if in a train of thoughts, spoke now and then to the following effect:

It is said, "The wife is one-half of the body". So her death is very painful. This pain is however due to one's outlook being physical; it disappears if the outlook is that of the Self. The *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* says, "The wife is dear because of the love of the Self". If the wife and others are identified with the Self, how then will pain arise? Nevertheless such disasters shake the mind of philosophers also.

We are happy in deep sleep. We remain then as the pure Self. The same we are just now too. In such sleep there was neither the wife nor others nor even 'I'. Now they become apparent and give rise to

pleasure or pain. Why should not the Self, which was blissful in deep sleep, continue its blissful nature even now? The sole obstruction to such continuity is the wrong identification of the Self with the body.

The Bhagavad Gita says: “The unreal hath no being; the real never ceaseth to be; the truth about both hath been perceived by the seers of the essence of things.” “The real is ever real, the unreal is ever unreal.” Again: “He is not born, nor doth he die; nor, having been, ceaseth he anymore to be; unborn, perpetual, eternal ancient, he is not slain when the body is slaughtered.” Accordingly, there is neither birth nor death. Waking is birth and sleep is death.

Was the wife with you when you went out to the office, or in your deep sleep? She was away from you. You were satisfied because of your thought that she was somewhere. Whereas now you think that she is not. The difference lies in the different thoughts. That is the cause of pain. The pain is because of the thought of the wife’s non-being. All this is the mischief of the mind. The fellow (*i.e*. the mind) creates pain for himself even when there is pleasure. But pleasure and pain are mental creations.

Again, why mourn the dead? They are free from bondage. Mourning is the chain forged by the mind to bind itself to the dead.

“What if anyone is dead? What if anyone is ruined? Be dead yourself - be ruined yourself”. In that sense there is no pain after one’s death. What is meant by this sort of death? Annihilation of the ego, though the body is alive. If the ego persists the man is afraid of death. The man mourns another’s death. He need not do so if he predeceases them (by waking up from the ego-dream, which amounts to killing the ego-sense). The experience of deep sleep clearly teaches that happiness consists in being without the body. The wise also confirm it, speaking of liberation after the body is given up. Thus the sage is awaiting the casting off of the body. Just as a labourer carrying a load on his head for the sake of wages bears the burden with no pleasure, carries it to the destination, and finally unburdens himself with relief and joy; so also the sage bears this body, awaiting the right and destined time to discard it. If now you are relieved of one half of the burden, *i.e*., the wife, should you not be thankful and be happy for it?

Nevertheless you cannot be so because of your physical outlook.

Even men who ought to know better and who have known the teaching about liberation after death etc., glorify liberation along with the body and call it some mysterious power of keeping the body eternally alive!

There will be no pain if the physical outlook is given up and if the person exists as the Self. Mourning is not the index of true love. It betrays love of the object, of its shape only. That is not love. True love is shown by the certainty that the object of love is in the Self and that it can never become non-existent. (Maharshi cited the story of Ahalya and Indra from *Yoga Vasishta* in this connection.)

Still it is true, pain on such occasions can only be assuaged by association with the wise.

18th June, 1936

Talk 204.

Maharshi on Self-Illumination: The 'I' concept is the ego. I-illumination is the Realisation of the Real Self. It is ever shining forth as 'I-I' in the intellectual sheath. It is pure Knowledge; relative knowledge is only a concept. The bliss of the blissful sheath is also but a concept. Unless there is the experience, however subtle it is, one cannot say "I slept happily". From his intellect he speaks of his blissful sheath. The bliss of sleep is but a concept to the person, the same as intellect. However, the concept of experience is exceedingly subtle in sleep. Experience is not possible without simultaneous knowledge of it (*i.e*. relative knowledge).

The inherent nature of the Self is Bliss. Some kind of knowledge has to be admitted, even in the realisation of Supreme Bliss. It may be said to be subtler than the subtlest.

The word *vijnana* (clear knowledge) is used both to denote the Realisation of the Self and knowing the objects. The Self is wisdom. It functions in two ways. When associated with the ego the knowledge is objective (*vijnana*). When divested of the ego and the Universal Self is realised, it is also called *vijnana*. The word raises a mental concept. Therefore we say that the Self-Realised

Sage knows by his mind, but his mind is pure. Again we say that the vibrating mind is impure and the placid mind is pure. The pure mind is itself Brahman; therefore it follows that Brahman is not other than the mind of the sage.

The *Mundaka Upanishad* says: "The knower of Brahman becomes the Self of Brahman." Is it not ludicrous? To know Him and become Him? They are mere words. The sage is Brahman - that is all. Mental functioning is necessary to communicate his experience. He is said to be contemplating the unbroken expanse. The Creator, Suka and others are also said never to swerve from such contemplation.

निमिषार्धं न तिष्टन्ति वृत्तिं ब्रह्ममयीं विना ।
यथा तिष्ठन्ति ब्रह्मद्याः सनकाद्याः शुकादयः ॥

- *Tejo Bindu Upanishad*. 1 - 47

Such 'contemplation' is again a mere word. How is that to be contemplated unless it is divided (into the contemplator and the contemplated). When undivided, how is contemplation possible? What function can Infinity have? Do we say that a river after its discharge into the ocean has become an ocean-like river? Why should we then speak of contemplation which has become unbroken, as being that of unbroken Infinity? The statement must be understood in the spirit in which it is made. It signifies the merging into the Infinite.

Self-Illumination or Self-Realisation is similar to it. The Self is ever shining. What does this 'I-illumination' mean then? The expression is an implied admission of mind function.

The gods and the sages experience the Infinite continuously and eternally, without their vision being obscured at any moment. Their minds are surmised by the spectators to function; but in fact they do not. Such surmise is due to the sense of individuality in those who draw inferences. There is no mental function in the absence of individuality. Individuality and mind functions are co-existent. The one cannot remain without the other.

The light of the Self can be experienced only in the intellectual sheath. Therefore *vijnana* of whatever kind (of object or of the Self) depends on the Self being Pure Knowledge.

Talk 205.

Mr. Cohen had been cogitating on the nature of the Heart, if the 'spiritual heart' beats; if so, how; or if it does not beat, then how is it to be felt?

M.: This heart is different from the physical heart; beating is the function of the latter. The former is the seat of spiritual experience. That is all that can be said of it.

Just as a dynamo supplies motive power to whole systems of lights, fans, etc., so the original Primal Force supplies energy to the beating of the heart, respiration, etc.

D.: How is the 'I-I' consciousness felt?

M.: As an unbroken awareness of 'I'. It is simply consciousness.

D.: Can we know it when it dawns?

M.: Yes, as consciousness. You are that even now. There will be no mistaking it when it is pure.

D.: Why do we have such a place as the 'Heart' for meditation?

M.: Because you seek consciousness. Where can you find it? Can you reach it externally? You have to find it internally. Therefore you are directed inward. Again the 'Heart' is only the seat of consciousness or the consciousness itself.

D.: On what should we meditate?

M.: Who is the meditator? Ask the question first. Remain as the meditator. There is no need to meditate.

Talk 206.

Mr. B. C. Das, a Lecturer in Physics of Allahabad University, asked: "Does not intellect rise and fall with the man?"

M.: Whose is the intellect? It is man's. Intellect is only an instrument.

D.: Yes. Does it survive man's death?

M.: Why think of death? See what happens in your sleep. What is your experience there?

D.: But sleep is transient whereas death is not.

M.: Sleep is intermediate between two waking states, so also death is between two successive births. Both are transient.

D.: I mean when the spirit is disembodied, does it carry the intellect with it?

M.: Spirit is not disembodied. The bodies differ. It may not be a gross body. It will then be a subtle body, as in sleep, dream or day-dream. Intellect does not alter; the bodies may differ according to circumstances.

D.: The spirit-body is the astral body then?

M.: The intellect is the astral body now.

D.: How can it be?

M.: Why not? You seem to think that the intellect cannot be limited like a body. It is only an aggregate of certain factors. What else is the astral body?

D.: But intellect is a sheath?

M.: Yes. Without intellect, no sheath is cognised. Who says that there are five sheaths? Is it not the intellect that declares thus?

Talk 207.

Deep sleep is only the state of non-duality. Can the difference between the individual and Universal souls persist there? Sleep implies forgetfulness of all differences: This alone constitutes happiness. See how carefully people prepare their beds to gain that happiness. Soft cushions, pillows and all the rest are meant to induce sound sleep, that is to say to end wakefulness. And yet the soft bed, etc., are of no use in the state of deep sleep itself. The implication is that all efforts are meant only to end ignorance. They have no use after realisation.

Talk 208.

It is enough that one surrenders oneself. Surrender is to give oneself up to the original cause of one's being. Do not delude yourself by imagining such source to be some God outside you. One's source is within yourself. Give yourself up to it. That means that you should seek the source and merge in it. Because you imagine yourself to be out of it, you raise the question "Where is the source?" Some contend that the sugar cannot taste its own sweetness and that a taster must taste and enjoy it. Similarly, an individual cannot be the Supreme and enjoy the Bliss of that state;

therefore the individuality must be maintained on the one hand and God-head on the other so that enjoyment may result! Is God insentient like sugar? How can one surrender oneself and yet retain one's individuality for supreme enjoyment? Furthermore they say also that the soul, reaching the divine region and remaining there, serves the Supreme Being. Can the sound of the word "service" deceive the Lord? Does He not know? Is He waiting for these people's service? Would not He - the Pure Consciousness - ask in turn: "Who are you apart from Me that presume to serve Me?"

Still more, they assume that the individual soul becomes pure by being divested of the ego and fit for being the body of the Lord. Thus the Lord is the Spirit and the purified souls constitute His body and limbs! Can there be a soul for the souls? How many souls are there? The answer must be, "There are many individual souls and One Supreme Soul." What is soul in that case? It cannot be the body, etc. What remains over after all these are eliminated must be said to be the soul. Thus even after realising the soul as that which cannot be discarded, the Supreme Soul must be known to exist. In that case, how was the soul realised to be the ultimate reality after discarding all that was alien to it? Should this be right, the soul which was described as that inalienable reality is not the true soul. All such confusion is due to the word 'soul' (atma). The same word atma is used to signify the body, the senses, the mind, the vital principle, the individual soul and the Supreme Being. This wide application of the word has given rise to the idea that the individual soul (*jivatma*), goes to constitute the body of the Supreme (*Paramatma*). "I, O Arjuna! am the *Self*, seated in the heart of all beings; ..." (Bhagavad Gita, X-20). The stanza shows that the Lord is the Atma (Self) of all beings. Does it say, "the Self of the selves"? If, on the other hand, you merge in the Self there will be no individuality left. You will become the Source itself. In that case what is surrender? Who is to surrender what and to whom? This constitutes devotion, wisdom, and investigation.

Among the Vaishnavites too, Saint Nammalvar says, "I was in a maze, sticking to 'I' and 'mine'; I wandered without knowing my Self. On realising my Self I understand that I myself am You and that 'mine' (*i.e.*, my possessions) is only You."

Thus - you see - Devotion is nothing more than knowing oneself. The school of Qualified Monism also admits it. Still, adhering to their traditional doctrine, they persist in affirming that the individuals are part of the Supreme - his limbs as it were. Their traditional doctrine says also that the individual soul should be made pure and then surrendered to the Supreme; then the ego is lost and one goes to the regions of Vishnu after one's death; then finally there is the enjoyment of the Supreme (or the Infinite)!

To say that one is apart from the Primal Source is itself a pretension; to add that one divested of the ego becomes pure and yet retains individuality only to enjoy or serve the Supreme, is a deceitful stratagem. What duplicity is this - first to appropriate what is really His, and then pretend to experience or serve Him! Is not all this already known to Him?

19th June, 1936

Talk 209.

Mr. B. C. Das, the Physics Lecturer, asked about free-will and destiny.

M.: Whose will is it? 'It is mine', you may say. You are beyond will and fate. Abide as that and you transcend them both. That is the meaning of conquering destiny by will. Fate can be conquered. Fate is the result of past actions. By association with the wise the bad tendencies are conquered. One's experiences are then viewed to their proper perspective.

I exist now. I am the enjoyer. I enjoy fruits of action. I was in the past and shall be in the future. Who is this 'I'? Finding this 'I' to be pure Consciousness beyond action and enjoyment, freedom and happiness are gained. There is then no effort, for the Self is perfect and there remains nothing more to gain.

So long as there is individuality, one is the enjoyer and doer. But if it is lost, the divine Will prevails and guides the course of events. The individual is perceptible to others who cannot perceive divine force. Restrictions and discipline are for other individuals and not for the liberated.

Free-will is implied in the scriptural injunctions to be good. It implies overcoming fate. It is done by wisdom. The fire of wisdom consumes all actions. Wisdom is acquired by association with the wise, or rather, its mental atmosphere.

Talk 210.

Man owes his movements to another Power, whereas he thinks that he does everything himself - just like a lame man bluffing that, were he helped to stand up, he would fight and chase away the enemy. Action is impelled by desire; desire arises only after the rise of the ego; and this ego owes its origin to a Higher Power on which its existence depends. It cannot remain apart. Why then prattle, "I do, I act, or I function"?

A Self-realised being cannot help benefiting the world. His very existence is the highest good.

Talk 211.

Mr. B. C. Das, the Physics Lecturer, asked: "Yoga means union. I wonder union of which with which."

M.: Exactly. Yoga implies prior division and it means later union of one with another. Who is to be united with whom? You are the seeker, seeking union with something. That something is apart from you. Your Self is intimate to you. You are aware of the Self. Seek it and be it. That will expand as the Infinite. Then there will be no question of yoga, etc. Whose is the separation (*viyoga*)? Find it.

D.: Are the stones, etc. destined to be always so?

M.: Who sees stones? They are perceived by your senses, which are in turn actuated by your mind. So they are in your mind. Whose mind is it? The questioner must find it himself. If the Self be found this question will not arise.

The Self is more intimate than the objects. Find the subject, and the objects will take care of themselves. The objects are seen by different persons according to their outlook and these theories are evolved. But who is the seer, the cogniser of these

theories? It is you. Find your Self. Then there is an end of these vagaries of the mind.

D.: What is this mind?

M.: A bundle of thoughts.

D.: Wherefrom has it its origin?

M.: Consciousness of the Self.

D.: Then thoughts are not real.

M.: They are not: the only reality is the Self.

Talk 212.

Maharshi observed: *Pradakshina* (the Hindu rite of going round the object of worship) is "All is within me." The true significance of the act of going round Arunachala is said to be as effective as circuit round the world. That means that the whole world is condensed into this Hill. The circuit round the temple of Arunachala is equally good; and self-circuit (*i.e.*, turning round and round) is as good as the last. So all are contained in the Self. Says the Ribhu Gita: "I remain fixed, whereas innumerable universes becoming concepts within my mind, rotate within me. This meditation is the highest circuit (*pradakshina*)."

20th June, 1936

Talk 213.

Mr. B. C. Das asked why the mind cannot be turned inward in spite of repeated attempts.

M.: It is done by practice and dispassion and that succeeds only gradually. The mind, having been so long a cow accustomed to graze stealthily on others' estates, is not easily confined to her stall. However much her keeper tempts her with luscious grass and fine fodder, she refuses the first time; then she takes a bit; but her innate tendency to stray away asserts itself; and she slips away; on being repeatedly tempted by the owner, she accustoms herself to the stall; finally even if let loose she would not stray away. Similarly with the mind. If once it finds its inner happiness it will not wander outward.

Talk 214.

Mr. Eknatha Rao, a frequent visitor, asked: Are there not modulations in contemplation according to circumstances?

M.: Yes. There are; at times there is illumination and then contemplation is easy; at other times contemplation is impossible even with repeated attempts. This is due to the working of the three Gunas (qualities in nature).

D.: Is it influenced by one's activities and circumstances?

M.: Those cannot influence it. It is the sense of doership - *kartrutva buddhi* - that forms the impediment.

22nd June, 1936

Talk 215.

Maharshi was reading G. U. Pope's translation of *Tiruvachakam* and came across the stanzas describing the intense feeling of *bhakti* as thrilling the whole frame, melting the flesh and bones, etc. He remarked: "Manickavasagar is one of those whose body finally resolved itself in a blazing light, without leaving a corpse behind."

Another devotee asked how it could be.

Maharshi said the gross body is only the concrete form of the subtle stuff - the mind. When the mind melts away and blazes forth as light, the body is consumed in that process. Nandanar is another whose body disappeared in blazing light.

Maj. Chadwick pointed out that Elisha disappeared in the same way. He desired to know if the disappearance of Christ's body from the tomb was like that.

M.: No. Christ's body was left as a corpse which was at first entombed, whereas the others did not leave corpses behind.

In the course of conversation, Maharshi said that the subtle body is composed of light and sound and the gross body is a concrete form of the same.

The Lecturer in Physics asked if the same light and sound were cognisable by senses.

M.: No. They are super-sensual. It is like this:

	Isvara (Universal)	*Jiva* (Individual)
Gross	Universe	Body
Subtle	Sound and Light - *Nada, Bindu*	Mind and *Prana*
Primal	*Atma* (Self) *Param* (transcendental)	*Atma* (Self) *Param* (transcendental)

They are ultimately the same.

The subtle body of the Creator is the mystic sound *Pranava*, which is sound and light. The universe resolves into sound and light and then into transcendence - *Param*.

Talk 216.

Maharshi gave the meaning of Arunachala:

Aruna = Red, bright like fire.

The fire is not ordinary fire which is only hot.

This is *Jnanagni* (Fire of Wisdom) which is neither hot nor cool.

Achala = a hill.

So it means Hill of Wisdom.

29th June, 1936

Talk 217.

Mr. A. Bose, an engineer from Bombay, asked: Does Bhagavan feel for us and show grace?

M.: You are neck-deep in water and yet cry for water. It is as good as saying that one neck-deep in water feels thirsty, or a fish in water feels thirsty, or that water feels thirsty.

D.: How may one destroy the mind?

M.: Is there a mind in the first place? What you call mind is an illusion. It starts from the 'I-thought'. Without the gross or subtle senses you cannot be aware of the body or the mind. Still it is possible for you

to be without these senses. In such a state you are either asleep or aware of the Self only. Awareness of Self is ever there. Remain what you truly are and this question will not arise.

D.: Is the body consciousness an impediment to realization?

M.: We are always beyond the body or the mind. If however you feel the body as the Self, then it is of course an impediment.

D.: Is the body or the mind of any use for the Self?

M.: Yes, inasmuch as it helps Self-realisation.

30th June, 1936

Talk 218.

Maharshi has been looking into the *Siva Purana* this day. He says:

Siva has the transcendental and immanent aspects as represented by His invisible, transcendental being and the *linga* aspect respectively. The *linga* originally manifested as Arunachala stands even to this day. This manifestation was when the moon was in the constellation of Orion (*Ardra*) in December. However it was first worshipped on Sivaratri day which is held sacred even now.

In the sphere of speech *Pranava* (the mystic sound AUM) represents the transcendental (*nirguna*) and the *Panchakshari* (the five-syllabled mantra) represents the immanent aspect (*saguna*).

Again Sri Bhagavan recounts the anecdote of Parvati testing Rama. The story is as follows:

Rama and Lakshmana were wandering in the forest in search of Sita. Rama was grief-stricken. Just then Siva and Parvati happened to pass close by. Siva saluted Rama and passed on. Parvati was surprised and asked Siva to explain why He, the Lord of the Universe, being worshipped by all, should stop to salute Rama, an ordinary human who having missed his consort was grief-stricken and moving in anguish in the wilderness and looking helpless. Siva then said: "Rama is simply acting as a human being would under the circumstances. He is nevertheless the incarnation of Vishnu, and deserves to be saluted. You may test him if you choose."

Parvati considered the matter, took the shape of Sita and appeared in front of Rama, as he was crying out the name of Sita in great anguish.

He looked at Parvati appearing as Sita, smiled and asked, “Why, Parvati, are you here? Where is Sambhu? Why have you taken the shape of Sita?” Parvati felt abashed and explained how she went there to test him and sought an explanation for Siva saluting him.

Rama replied: “We are all only aspects of Siva, worshipping Him at sight and remembering Him out of sight.”

Talk 219.

Ramakrishna Swami, a long-resident disciple, asked Maharshi the meaning of *Twaiyarunachala Sarvam*, a stanza in *The Five Hymns*.

Maharshi explained it in detail, saying that the universe is like a painting on a screen - the screen being the Red Hill, Arunachala. That which rises and sinks is made up of what it rises from. The finality of the universe is the God Arunachala. Meditating on Him or on the seer, the Self, there is a mental vibration ‘I’ to which all are reduced. Tracing the source of ‘I’, the primal ‘I-I’ alone remains over, and it is inexpressible. The seat of Realisation is within and the seeker cannot find it as an object outside him. That seat is bliss and is the core of all beings. Hence it is called the Heart. The only useful purpose of the present birth is to turn within and realise it. There is nothing else to do.

D.: How is annihilation of predispositions to be accomplished?

M.: You are in that condition in realisation.

D.: Does it mean that, holding on to the Self, the tendencies should be scorched as they begin to emerge?

M.: They will themselves be scorched if only you remain as you truly are.

1st July, 1936

Talk 220.

Mr. B. C. Das, the Physics Lecturer, asked: Contemplation is possible only with control of mind and control can be accomplished only by contemplation. Is it not a vicious circle?

M.: Yes, they are interdependent. They must go on side by side. Practice and dispassion bring about the result gradually. Dispassion is practised to check the mind from being projected outward; practice is to keep

it turned inward. There is a struggle between control and contemplation. It is going on constantly within. Contemplation will in due course be successful.

D.: How to begin? Your Grace is needed for it.

M.: Grace is always there. "Dispassion cannot be acquired, nor realization of the Truth, nor inherence in the Self, in the absence of Guru's Grace," the Master quoted.

Practice is necessary. It is like training a roguish bull confined to his stall by tempting him with luscious grass and preventing him from straying.

Then the Master read out a stanza from *Tiruvachakam*, which is an address to the mind, saying: "O humming bee (namely, mind)! Why do you take the pains of collecting tiny specks of honey from innumerable flowers? There is one from whom you can have the whole storehouse of honey by simply thinking or seeing or speaking of Him. Get within and hum to Him (*hrimkara*)."

D.: Should one have a form in one's mind, supplemented with reading or chanting God's name in one's meditation?

M.: What is mental conception except it be meditation?

D.: Should the form be supplemented by repetition of *mantras* or dwelling on divine attributes?

M.: When *japa* is the predominating tendency, vocal *japa* becomes eventually mental, which is the same as meditation.

Talk 221.

Mr. Bose: A form means duality. Is that good?

M.: One who questions like that had better adopt the path of enquiry. Form is not for him.

D.: In my meditation a blank interposes; I see no figure.

M.: Of course not.

D.: What about the blank?

M.: Who sees the blank? You must be there. There is consciousness witnessing the blank.

D.: Does it mean that I must go deeper and deeper?

M.: Yes. There is no moment when you are not.

2nd July, 1936

Talk 222.

Dr. Popatlal Lohara, a visitor, has studied several books including "Upadesa Sara" and visited several saints, *sadhus* and yogis, probably 1,500 as he puts their number. A *sadhu* in Trimbak has told him that he has still debts to pay which, if done, will enable him to have realisation. His only debt, as he conceived it, was the marriage of his son. It has since been performed and he now feels himself free from *karmic* indebtedness. He therefore seeks Sri Bhagavan's guidance for freedom from 'mental unhappiness' which persists in spite of his not being indebted.

M.: Which text of "Upadesa Sara" did you read?

D.: The Sanskrit text.

M.: It contains the answer to your question.

D.: My mind cannot be made steady by any amount of effort. I have been trying it since 1918.

The Master quoted from "Upadesa Sara": "Merging the mind into the Heart certainly comprises meritorious duty (*karma*), devotion (*bhakti*), yoga and supreme wisdom (*jnana*)." That is the whole truth in a nutshell.

D.: That does not satisfy my search for happiness. I am unable to keep my mind steady.

The Master quoted again from the same book: "Continuous search for what the mind is results in its disappearance. That is the straight path."

D.: How to search for the mind then?

M.: The mind is only a bundle of thoughts. The thoughts have their root in the 'I-thought'. He quoted; "Whoever investigates the origin of the 'I-thought', for him the ego perishes. This is the true investigation." The true "I" is then found shining by itself.

D.: This 'I-thought' rises from me. But I do not know the Self.

M.: All these are only mental concepts. You are now identifying yourself with a wrong 'I', which is the 'I-thought'. This 'I-thought' rises and sinks, whereas the true significance of 'I' is beyond both. There cannot be a break in your being. You, who slept, are also now awake. There was not unhappiness in your deep sleep. Whereas it

exists now. What is it that has happened now so that this difference is experienced? There was no 'I-thought' in your sleep, whereas it is present now. The true 'I' is not apparent and the false 'I' is parading itself. This false 'I' is the obstacle to your right knowledge. Find out wherefrom this false 'I' arises. Then it will disappear. You will be only what you are - *i.e.*, absolute Being.

D.: How to do it? I have not succeeded so far.

M.: Search for the source of the 'I-thought'. That is all that one has to do. The universe exists on account of the 'I-thought'. If that ends there is an end of misery also. The false 'I' will end only when its source is sought.

Dr. Lohara asked for the meaning of one stanza in "Upadesa Sara".

M.: The one then in sleep is also now awake. There was happiness in sleep; but misery in wakefulness. There was no 'I'- thought in sleep; but it is now, while awake. The state of happiness and of no 'I-thought' in sleep is without effort. The aim should be to bring about that state even now. That requires effort.

<table>
<tr><td>Sleep</td><td>Wakefulness</td><td rowspan="2">Bring about sleep even in the waking state and that is realisation. Effort is directed to extinguishing the 'I-thought' and not for ushering the true 'I'. For the latter is eternal and requires no effort on your part.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Effortless
Happiness
No 'I-thought'</td><td>No happiness
'I-thought'</td></tr>
</table>

Talk 223.

Dr. Lohara: Why does the mind not sink into the Heart even while meditating?

M.: A floating body does not readily sink unless some means are adopted for making it do so. Breath-control makes the mind quiescent. The mind must be alert and meditation pursued unremittingly even when it is at peace. Then it sinks into the heart. Or the floating body might be loaded with weights and made to sink. So also association with the wise will make the mind sink into the Heart.

Such association is both mental and physical. The extremely visible being (of the Guru) pushes the mind inward. He is also in the heart of the seeker and so he draws the latter's inward-bent mind into the Heart.

This question is asked only when the man begins to meditate and finds it difficult. Let him practise breath-control just a little and the mind will be purified. It does not now sink into the heart because the latent tendencies stand as obstacles. They are removed by breath-control or association with the wise. In fact the mind is always in the Heart. But it is restive and moves about on account of latent tendencies. When the tendencies are made ineffective it will be restful and at peace.

By breath-control the mind will be only temporarily quiescent, because the tendencies are still there. If the mind is transformed into the Self it will no longer give trouble. That is done by meditation.

Talk 224.

A disciple asked how he could recognise his own natural primal condition.

M.: Absolute freedom from thoughts is the state conducive to such recognition.

(*From the attendant's notes*)

Talk 225.

When Sri Bhagavan and Rangaswami, an attendant, were on the rocks, Bhagavan noticed someone in the Asramam rocking in a rocking chair, and remarked to the attendant:

"Siva made over all His own possessions to Vishnu and wandered away in the forests and wilderness and cemeteries and lived on food begged by Him. In His view non-possession is higher in the scale of happiness than possession of things."

D.: What is that higher happiness?

M.: To be free from anxieties. Possessions create anxieties such as their safeguarding, their utilisation, etc. Non-possession does not bring any anxieties in its train. Therefore Siva resigned everything in favour of Vishnu and He himself went away happy.

Divestment of possessions is the highest happiness.

3rd July, 1936

Talk 226.

A visitor from Tirukoilur asked if the study of the sacred books will reveal the truth.

M.: That will not suffice.

D.: Why not?

M.: Samadhi alone can reveal it. Thoughts cast a veil over Reality and so it cannot be clear in states other than *Samadhi*.

D.: Is there thought in Samadhi? Or is there not?

M.: There will only be the feeling '*I am*' and no other thoughts.

D.: Is not '*I am*' a thought?

M.: The egoless 'I am' is not thought. It is realisation. The meaning or significance of 'I' is God. The experience of '*I am*' is to *Be Still*.

4th July, 1936

Talk 227.

The Master observed: "Being of the nature of Bliss why does one continue to crave for happiness? To be rid of that craving is itself salvation. The Scriptures say, 'You are That'. The imparting of that knowledge is their purpose. The realisation must be by your finding out who you are and abiding as That, *i.e*. your Self. To be repeating, 'I am that' or 'not this' is only a waste of time. For the worthy disciple, the work lies within himself and not without."

As Bhagavan was descending the Hill, one of the workers, just outside the Asramam stopped work and was about to prostrate before the Master.

Then the Master said: "To engage in your duty is the true prostration."

The Master's attendant asked: "How?"

M.: To perform one's duty carefully is the greatest service to God. (Then, smiling, he entered the hall.)

Talk 228.

At lunch a visitor from Nellore asked the Master for a tiny bit of food (*prasad*) from His dish.

M.: Eat without thinking of the ego. Then what you eat becomes Bhagavan's *prasad*.

After lunch the Master continued humorously: "If I had given you one morsel from my plate, each one would ask for a morsel too. What will be left for me if I distribute the whole plate to others? So you see that it is not devotion. There is no significance in eating a morsel from my plate. Be a true devotee."

8th July, 1936

Talk 229.

At 8 a.m. the pet squirrel was watching for an opportunity to run out. The Master remarked. "All wish to rush out. There is no limit to going out. Happiness lies within and not without."

20th July, 1936

Talk 230.

A visitor: Can one realise the Truth by learning the scriptures and study of books?

M.: No. So long as predispositions remain latent in the mind, realisation cannot be achieved. Sastra learning is itself a *vasana*. Realisation is only in *samadhi*.

Talk 231.

A visitor asked: 'What is *mouna* (silence)?'

M.: *Mouna* is not closing the mouth. It is eternal speech.

D.: I do not understand.

M.: That state which transcends speech and thought is *mouna*.

D.: How to achieve it?

M.: Hold some concept firmly and trace it back. By such concentration silence results. When practice becomes natural it will end in silence.

Meditation without mental activity is silence. Subjugation of the mind is meditation. Deep meditation is eternal speech.

D.: How will worldly transaction go on if one observes silence?

M.: When women walk with water pots on their heads and chat with their companions they remain very careful, their thoughts concentrated on the loads on their heads. Similarly when a sage engages in activities, these do not disturb him because his mind abides in Brahman.

Talk 232.

The Master said on another occasion: "Only the sage is a true devotee."

Talk 233.

D.: What is the result of "Rama Japa" (repetition of God Rama's name)?

M.: 'Ra' is Reality, 'Ma' is the mind; their union is the fruit of "Rama Japa". Utterance of words is not enough. The elimination of thoughts is wisdom. It is the Absolute Existence.

Talk 234.

A Muslim visitor asked about *asana* (physical posture).

M.: Abidance in God is the only true posture.

Talk 235.

Mr. T. K. S. Iyer, a disciple, was excited because someone in the town had spoken disparagingly of the Master. He did not retort and came away excited. So he asked Master what penalty should be paid for his failure to defend him.

M.: Patience, more patience; tolerance, more tolerance!

Talk 236.

On the death of King George V two devotees were discussing the matter in the hall. They were very upset. The Master said to them. "Whoever dies or is lost, what is that to you? Die yourself and lose yourself, becoming one with love."

Talk 237.

A man brought with him a silver idol of Subrahmanya and copper idols of Valli and Devayanai. He said to Sri Bhagavan: "I have been worshipping them for the last ten years but have been rewarded only with calamities. What shall I do with them?

When I asked others, they attribute my worries to some fault in the make-up of the idols - for instance, the difference in the metals of their make. Is it so?"

M.: Did they say that it was wrong to worship?

Talk 238.

In answer to some question Maharshi said: "There is a state when words cease and silence prevails."

D.: How to communicate thought to each other?

M.: That is only when there is the notion of two.

D.: How to get peace?

M.: That is the natural state. The mind obstructs the innate peace. Our investigation is only in the mind. Investigate the mind; it will disappear.

There is no entity by name mind. Because of the emergence of thoughts we surmise something from which they start. That we term mind. When we probe to see what it is, there is nothing like it. After it has vanished, Peace will be found to remain eternal.

D.: What is *buddhi* (intellect)?

M.: The thinking or discriminating faculty. These are mere names. Be it the ego, the mind or the intellect, it is all the same. Whose mind? Whose intellect? The ego's. Is the ego real? No. We confound the ego and call it intellect or mind.

D.: Emerson says, "Soul answers soul by itself - not by description or words."

M.: Quite so. However much you learn, there will be no bounds to knowledge. You ignore the doubter but try to solve the doubts. On the other hand, hold on to the doubter and the doubts will disappear.

D.: Then the question resolves itself to knowing the Self.

M.: Quite so.

D.: How to know the Self?

M.: See what the Self is. What you consider to be the Self, is really either the mind or the intellect or the 'I-thought'. The other thoughts arise only after the 'I-thought'. So hold on to it. The others will vanish leaving the Self as the residuum.

D.: The difficulty lies in reaching it.

M.: There is no reaching it at all because it is eternal, here and now. If the Self were to be gained anew, it would not be permanent.

D.: How to obtain equanimity or peace or equilibrium of mind? What is the best way?

M.: I have already answered it. Investigate the mind. It is eliminated and you remain over. Let your standpoint become that of wisdom then the world will be found to be God.

dristin jnanamayim kritva pasyet Brahmamayam jagat.

So the question is one of outlook. You pervade all. See yourself and all are understood. But you have now lost hold of your Self and go about doubting other things.

D.: How to know the Self?

M.: Are there two 'I's? How do you know your own existence? Do you see yourself with these eyes? Question yourself. How does this question arise? Do I remain to ask it or not? Can I find my Self as in a mirror?

Because your outlook has been outward bent, it has lost sight of the Self and your vision is external. The Self is not found in external objects. Turn your look within and plunge down; you will be the Self.

D.: Is discovery of the Self dependent on the observance of caste rules? Or should we flout them?

M.: Not in the beginning. Observe them to start with. Caste-rules serve as a check on the vagaries of the mind. It is thus purified.

D.: The unknowable can be attained only by the grace of the unknowable.

M.: He helps the attainment. That is the Grace.

D.: How to check the mind?

M.: Will a thief betray himself? Will the mind find itself? The mind cannot seek the mind. You have ignored what is real and are holding on to the mind which is unreal and also trying to find what it is. Was there mind in your sleep? It was not. It is now here. It is therefore impermanent. Can the mind be found by you? The mind is not you. You think you are the mind and therefore ask me how it is checked. If it is there it can be checked. But it is not. Understand this truth by search. Search for unreality is fruitless. Therefore seek the reality, *i.e.*, the Self. That is the way to rule over the mind. There is only one thing Real!

D.: What is the one Real thing?

M.: That is what is: the others are only appearances. Diversity is not its nature. We are reading the printed characters on paper but ignore the paper which is the background. Similarly you are taken up by the manifestations of the mind and let go the background. Whose fault is it?

D.: Is there a limit to the Self?

M.: What is the Self?

D.: The Individual soul is the Self.

M.: What is the individual soul? Is there any difference between the two or are they identical?

Any new appearances are bound to disappear. Anything created will certainly be destroyed. The eternal is not born nor does it die. We are now confounding appearances with reality. Appearance carries its end in itself. What is it that appears newly? If you cannot find it, surrender to the substratum of appearances unreservedly; then, the reality will be left over as the residue.

D.: What happens to the man after death?

M.: Engage yourself in the living present. The future will take care of itself. Do not worry about the future. The state before creation and the process of creation are dealt with in the scriptures in order that you may know the present. Because you say you are born, therefore they say, yes, and add that God created you.

But do you see God or anything else in your sleep? If God be real why does He not shine forth in your sleep also? *You are always* - now the same as you were in sleep. You are not different from that one in sleep. But why should there be difference in the feelings or experiences of the two states?

Did you ask, while asleep, the question regarding your birth? or where do I go after death? Why think of all these now in the wakeful state? Let what is born think of its birth and the remedy, its cause and ultimate results.

What is birth? Is it of the 'I-thought' or of the body? Is 'I' separate from the body or identical with it? How did this 'I-thought' arise? Is the 'I-thought' your nature or is anything else of your nature?

D.: Who is to ask these questions?

M.: Exactly - that is it. There is no end to it all.

D.: Are we then to keep quiet?

M.: Doubts cease to afflict when the confusion (*moha*) is surpassed.

D.: Your statements amount to cessation of *vichara* - investigation.

M.: If *atma-vichara* (self-investigation), ceases, *loka vichara* (world-investigation) takes its place. (Laughter in the hall).

Engage in Self-investigation, then the non-self will disappear. The Self will be left over. This is self-investigation of the Self. The one word Self is equivalent to the mind, body, man, individual. the Supreme and all else.

Talk 239.

Mr. M. Frydman: One imagines things and enjoys them by strength of imagination. Such creations are possible to Brahma the Creator. Can the same statement apply to His creature, man?

M.: This is also your thought.

D.: Krishnamurti says that man should find out the 'I'. Then 'I' dissolves away, being only a bundle of circumstances. There is nothing behind the 'I'. His teaching seems to be very much like Buddha's.

M.: Yes - yes, beyond expression.